

FOREWORD

During WWII I kept diaries of my time in the service. It was the only time in my life that I kept a record of my activities. We have kept them thru the years, and I had never intended putting them in a book form. However, times have changed so much that I hope it will be interesting to see how things were "back then". Technology and nuclear energy, bombs, etc. have transformed our world. Someone may say some of the things aren't quite accurate in my accounts. In all the frenzy of war I may not have all the details, but it was what I lived thru, by the Grace of God, and the way I saw it.

J. Thomas Chesnutt

Hope Hull, AL

January 2001

Original edition

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

| | |
|--------------|--|
| AA | Anti aircraft guns |
| AK | Supply ship and troop transport |
| AM | Mine Sweep |
| APD | Transport |
| BB | Battleship |
| C47 | Cargo plane----Paratroopers jumped from them |
| CA | Large cruiser |
| CL | Light cruiser |
| CVE | Small carrier—a converted one |
| DD or Can | Destroyer |
| DE | Small destroyer |
| Higgins boat | Landing craft |
| LCI | Landing craft infantry |
| LCT | Landing Craft tank—carried 1 tank and troops |
| LST | Landing ship tank—carried 4 or more tanks and troops |
| PT | Torpedo boats—small boats |

| | |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| Betty | Twin engine bomber--Japanese |
| Emily | Four engine flying boat—Japanese |
| Val | Dive bomber—Japanese |
| Zero | Fighter--Japanese |

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------|
| A20 | Army Air Corps attack bomber |
| B17 | " " " four engine bomber |
| B24 | " " " " " " |
| B25 | " " " twin engine bomber |
| B29 | " " " four engine bomber |
| F4F | Fighter plane—Navy Wildcat |
| F6F | " " Navy Hellcat |
| F4U | Corsair—fighter—Navy and Marine |
| PBM | Four engine flying boat |
| PBY | Twin engine flying boat—a plane |
| P38 | Army Air Corps fighter |
| P47 | " " " " |
| SBD | Dive bomber |
| TBF | Torpedo bomber |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Captain or Skipper | Commander of the ship |
| CIC | Combat information center |
| Exec. | Short for Executive—second in command of ship |
| Fox Dog | Gun control radar |

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

PAL Prisoner at large
SC Air search radar
SG Surface radar

GQ General quarters—battle stations manned
TF or TG Task Force or Task Group—a group of ships of one kind or a variety, depending on the situation. Subs were not included
TFC Task Force Commander

Military time: There are 24 hours in a day and that is how the time is counted.
Midnight is 0000 and also 2400. 0100 is 1 AM, 1200 is noon,
1500 is 3 PM

Fish A torpedo

Directions on a ship

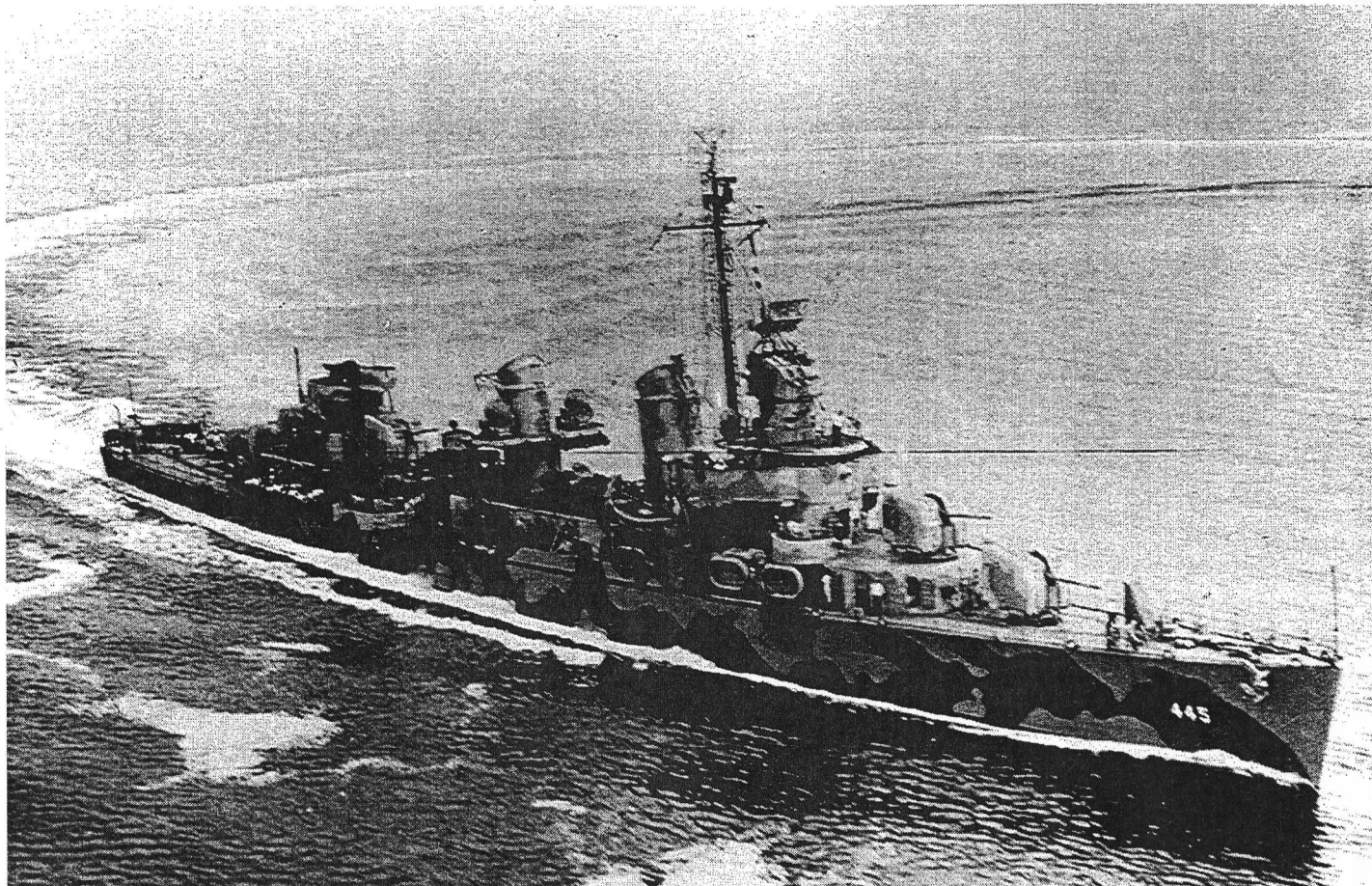
| | |
|--------------|---|
| Fantail | back of ship |
| Aft or stern | back—if you go aft, you are going to back of ship |
| Bow | front of ship |
| Forward | going to front of ship |
| Starboard | right side |
| Port | left side |
| Beam | widest part of the ship |

Knot Indicates the speed of a ship—1 1/8 miles per hour

| | | |
|---|-------|-------------------------------------|
| S | South | |
| N | North | |
| E | East | |
| W | West | And any combinations (NE, SW, etc.) |

Code Names: Button----- Espiritu Santos
Cactus-----Guadalcanal
Rosey-----Efate

Everything in quotes is a direct quotation from my diaries. The other is my explanation.



— 1998 — *U.S.S. FLETCHER*

January 1998

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October 1998

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December 1998

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WWII DIARIES

After Pearl Harbor was bombed in Dec. 1941 I knew that I wanted to enlist in the service. I wanted to fly, but I did not want to join the Army Air Corp . I had seen too many crashes in and around Montgomery as the pilots were training at Maxwell. In fact, one crashed on our farm. I decided on the Navy and enlisted to go into Flight Training.

August 8, 1942 Son (J.P.) Judge and I left Montgomery and went to Birmingham. On the 10th, at 10 AM, we signed the papers to join the Navy. There was a special coach for us and at 9 PM that day, thirty of us left for San Diego. We arrived on Friday at 8 AM. The next day "we were given all kinds of shots, haircuts and outfitted in uniforms." I had signed up for Flight Training and I was told that I would be sent there.

15 Aug. We spent one and a half weeks in camp learning to drill, etc. Then we went to another camp and from there to Paul Jones. My first liberty was 6 Sept. and Son and I went to San Diego and Mission Beach. We had another week of drilling and the next liberty Son and I were joined by a boy from Hayneville and another from Ft. Deposit.

16 Sept. There was more drilling the previous week and then it was announced that we had finished our training. I waited three days for my orders and then was notified that I would leave on the 21st. I couldn't go on liberty with Son because of my orders. He ended up going to New Mexico to Machinist School.

22 Sept. I arrived in San Francisco at 8 PM. The next day I looked over Treasure Island. There were gun shore batteries under piles of lumber in case "the camp was under attack." The orders came to be ready to leave on a ship the next morning. I thought it was bound for Pearl Harbor.

24-26 Sept. We boarded the ship at 9 AM Thurs. We were not fed until 8 PM. Needless to say, we were hungry! The standard procedure on the President Tyler until we arrived in Pearl Harbor was two meals a day. The ship was not equipped for the number of men aboard. They had a makeshift galley, cramped bunks, and the only showers we had were salt water showers on the top side of the ship. We made a trial run Friday and sailed out of Frisco under the Golden Gate Bridge at 11:30 AM.

26 Sept.-4 Oct. We arrived in the harbor of Pearl on Sunday at 1 PM. We went ashore and 3,000 men were on the baseball field. The procedure was that names were read and then the ship to which they were assigned. Thirty-three of us were assigned to the Juneau. We went aboard the Portland for further training. My training consisted of loading ammunition and supplies for three days.

8 Oct. "We went to see the town of Honolulu. Not much of a town, but very interesting—in more ways than one. Saw some of our friends from other ships."

9-12 Oct. We left the Harbor Friday afternoon and headed southwest. The orders were posted that we would make a raid on the Gilbert Islands on Wed.

14 Oct. Up at 3 AM and ready for action. We sailed into the harbor at 2:30 PM. We saw destroyers, tankers and cargo ships in the Gilbert Islands harbor. One of our

sea planes was hit and had to land. We picked him up after the raid at 3 PM. We stayed at our battle stations until 11 PM. The Portland was a 8" heavy cruiser.

15-17 Oct. '42 We steamed southeast and planned to meet the San Juan Saturday.

18 Oct. (Sun.) Islands were sighted at 10 AM. We had church on the fantail. We anchored in the harbor of Espiritu Santos (in Spanish it means the Holy Spirit) in the New Hebrides group. The Free French were supposed to be in control of it and the code name for the base was Button.

19-10 Oct. Supplies were brought aboard and there were all the preparations made for another trip.

21 Oct. The Portland was ready to get under way, so 29 of us who were headed for the Juneau were put ashore to wait for it. We put up a tent to stay in and "there were plenty of Coconut and Palm Trees."

The out house or head was up on a hill from our tents. It consisted of two seats with no sides or walls—you sat out in the open. Clotworthy had dysentery and went 52 times between breakfast and lunch. One night one man was running to the head and the guard told him to stop. The man kept running and was told to stop again. The reply was, "I've got to go and if you have to shoot, shoot, but I can't stop!!"

Our shower was a barrel overhead with a shower head on it with a rope to pull to get water. We couldn't use much water, so we wet ourselves, soaped and then turned the shower back on to rinse off—all done very quickly and of course, they were out in the open, too. All the water was distilled from the ocean.

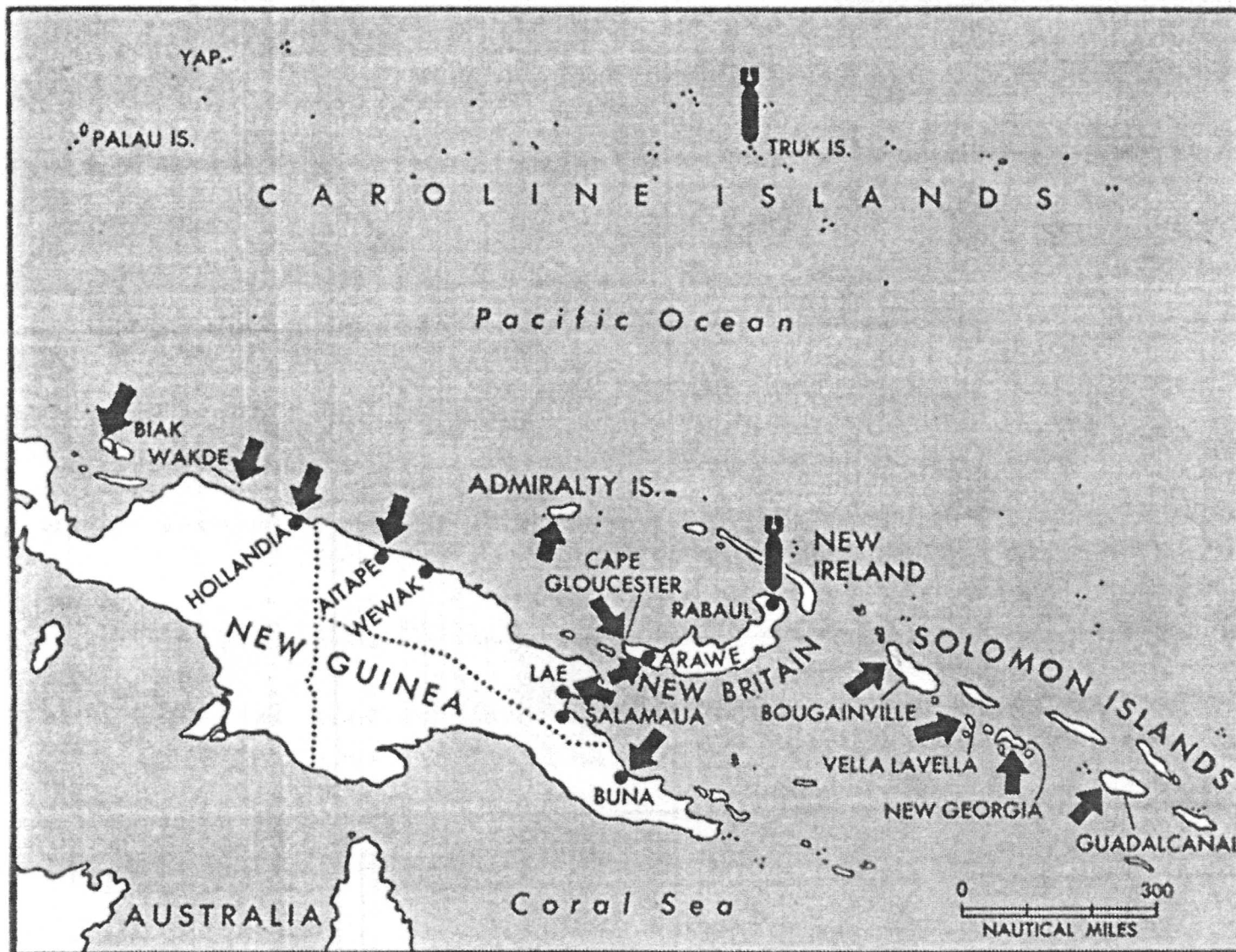
The water we drank was the distilled water and was sitting around in garbage cans under the trees for us to drink. It was always over 100 degrees when we drank it and of course, there was no such thing as ice.

The Free French exported the coconuts, but with the war they couldn't ship them. We would pile them up to get rid of them and there would be a pile of coconuts 20 feet high.

A cool day was 90 degrees and there were squalls all during the day. The food was served under a tent about 12'x12'----we would walk thru the tent and they would put food on our trays---THEN we had to try and eat it before it was washed away by the rain or eaten by the insects. The trays were Navy issue, but we each kept our own. There was no place to wash them, so we cleaned them the best we could for the next meal. Needless to say, I wasn't very impressed by island living!

22-24 Oct. I looked over the island and met a fellow from Washington whose name was Chesnutt. We went on a trip around the island to a Marine Air Base. We were expecting a raid on the island that night.

26 Oct. Everyone was up and in foxholes at 3:30 AM, but there was not an attack. The President Coolidge went in the wrong entrance, hit one of our own mines and went down at 11 AM. The soldiers that were being transported were told to leave the ship and not take their equipment because it was not going to sink. There was not loss of life, but when it sank, all the new automatic rifles went down with her. That made 5,000 soldiers on shore with no equipment. The trucks, vehicles and all went down. Some of the men didn't even have shoes as they left them on the ship. There



were already 30 fellows from a ship which was sunk two weeks before on the island besides the personnel stationed there. Supplies and equipment were in SHORT supply because the US was not prepared for war. It was hard to see the loss of much needed equipment.

27-31 Oct. '42 "We are helping the survivors." I met Robert Alex McCall who was from Pintlala and one of my schoolmates. He was a Radioman on the Coolidge.

1-7 Nov. I went to church on Sunday. " I met a Lt. Dabney off the Hornet who was from FL and GA. He was a swell fellow and told me to look him up after the war in Orlando, FL. He had a chemical company and said if I wanted it, he would give me a job." On Monday at 1:30 AM a sub shelled the airport, but overshot the field. One night we went down to the 76th Camp to hear a band. " It was swell music and they played Stardust."

8 Nov. I went aboard the USS Fletcher for duty and we steamed out the same day.

9-11 Nov. We were on patrol south of Guadalcanal with the 67th. Before I was in the Pacific, I thought Guadalcanal was a canal like the Suez or Panama Canal. I was young, from the country in Alabama and "green" -----I got a quick education!

12 Nov. We were between Florida Island and Guadalcanal covering cargo ships. We were attacked around 3 PM by 21 TB's and 12 fighters. All but one fighter was shot down and we got credit for six. None of the ships were hit, but we still stayed on the alert.

Nov. 13 (Fri.) "Japs came in around north side of Salvo and were picked up by radar about 1:30 AM. Between 30 & 40 ships in forces. Action began around 2 AM and everybody opened up with everything. There were about 15-20 supply ships and 33 Jap warships. We steamed between the supply and warships. Fired all ten of our fish at large Jap ships in battle line. In half an hour it was all over and we had lost 6 destroyers. Atlanta dead in the water and had to be sunk, Juneau hit, Minneapolis bow blown off, Portland hit aft with fish, San Francisco hit by shell fire on bridge, also plane crashed on her deck the afternoon before. We sunk a cruiser with shell fire, a battleship with fish and suffered no hits except some holes in forward stacks. Two fish passed under us, one forward and one aft. After all cleared, we headed back to Button. At 11 AM the Juneau blew up and went down with all hands except two that had gone over to help with wounded on the San Francisco and 7 who had gone over the side during the night."

The Fletcher was written up in the newspapers as the "lucky" ship. There were 13 ships, we were the 13th in line, it was Friday the 13th, and our ship number was 445 (added, it totals 13). The reason we were the last in line was that we were the only ship that had radar and the commander of the fleet didn't think it would work. We should have been the first in line. Six of our ships were sunk, 6 damaged and we were the only one not hurt.

Actually, the Fletcher received credit for disabling the battleship and it sunk the next day. At that stage in the war, many times ships were given credit for sinkings that did not occur.

I didn't realize it at the time, but it was the Lord protecting me---not only in battle, but not allowing me to catch up with the Juneau which went down.

14-15 Nov. '42 We steamed back to Button and arrived there the 16th. The wounded were taken to the hospital and the dead buried at Espiritu Santos. We learned the Japs had lost some cargo ships and three large ships. They had a large fleet at Guadalcanal and could have destroyed our fleet.

We spent four days in the harbor at Button resting and the ships were repaired as best they could. At that point of time, the US did not have the equipment, ships or supplies that they needed. We actually just limped along getting by with whatever was available.

21-25 Nov. We went out on patrol around Button. We were waiting for orders to pull out on one hour's notice.

29 Nov. Pulled out of Button with the 67th at 1 AM and headed to Guadalcanal at high speed.

30 Nov. (Wed) The Jap ships were picked up at 1 AM pulling in to unload supplies at the rear end of Guadalcanal. "We steamed in once again leading the battle line and hell broke loose. In one half hour the Japs that were left headed out at high speed. The Northampton was sunk and we picked up 700 of her crew. The Pensacola was hit by fish. We fired all fish, saw large explosion, but could not see results. Japs lost 10-12 ships. Four Jap cargo ships burned on shore. We headed back to Button."

The Fletcher in peace time probably would have 200 men, but during wartime we had 313—that was crowded. Then when we picked up 700 more men, there were men everywhere. Actually, they slept sitting up, crouched down or whatever position they could get some space. We could hardly walk without stepping on somebody. It was good that they were only with us a couple days.

When there was a battle, the sky was beautiful with all the shells exploding and the colors radiant. Of course, with the fear and the duties we had to do, we weren't fully aware of it then. I actually believed that I would get killed during some of the battles. I didn't see any way in the world that I could live thru the fighting day by day and felt sure the war would last 4-5 years, especially, if we had to take Japan.

1 Dec. "We arrived back in Button and once again relaxed from that old tense feeling.

2-5 Dec. The ship lay in Button taking on supplies. Our skipper was Commander Cole and the Executive Officer (second in command) was Wiley. I had been working on the deck gang, but we had taken aptitude tests. One day Wiley called me in and asked, "What do you want to strike for?"

I asked, "What is striking, Sir?"

He replied, "What do you want to do?"

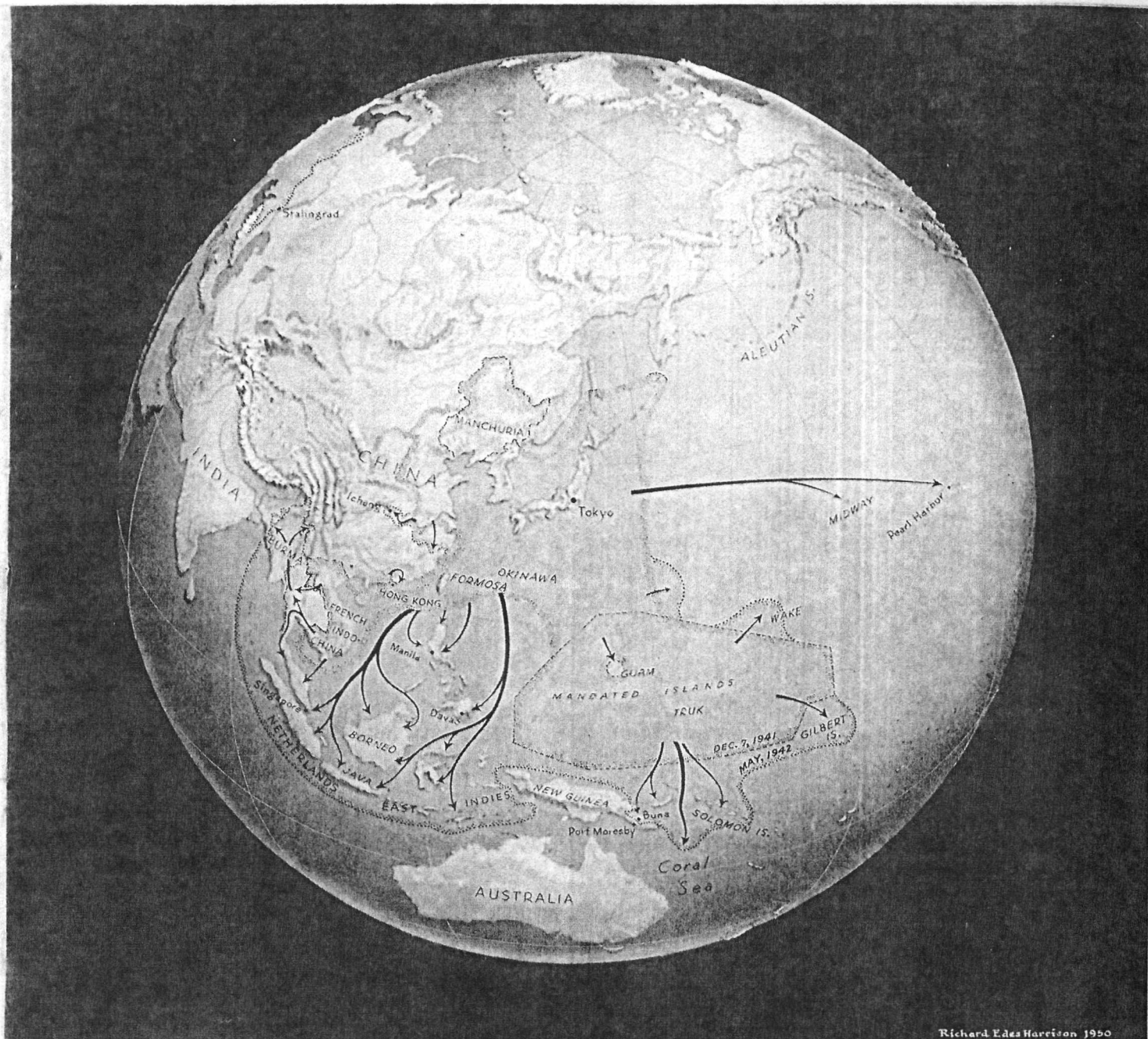
I thought and said, "Radioman."

Wiley asked, "How is your spelling?"

"Lousy, Sir."

"How about Radar?" Wiley replied.

I said, "Yes, Sir, I'll take it. What is Radar?"



V

Japanese Conquests

That is how I started on Radar. Someone who had been on Radar a few months before taught me and occasionally when we went to Pearl I took some classes. When we weren't in battle we had four hour shifts. That meant the most sleep I got at one time was 6 hours. There were three of us on duty: one operated the radar for a half hour, then switched to Sonar, then rested for a half hour. When we were at battle stations (general quarters) we did not rotate and we did not leave---everyone was on duty continuously. Sometimes that lasted days at a time.

Carpenter, Blanchette, Horseman, Sam Knight, Rogers, Hampton and I were in the Radar gang then. Calkins was a Radioman and Muchow joined Calkins about a year later.

6 Dec. '42 We pulled out of Button expecting trouble, but didn't receive any. The next day we went back to Button, joined the 67th and sailed out that afternoon.

8-10 Dec. We sailed south of Guadalcanal and then returned to port.

11-16 Dec. While we were at Button, Cole and Wiley left to start CIC (Combat Information Center) elsewhere. They had done a good job and were shipped to the States. We had a new captain.

17-22 Dec. The Fletcher pulled out and joined battleships south of Guadalcanal.

23-26 Dec. "At Button with 67th. Big Chow on the 25th." We had some extra food!

The rest of the year we were in and out of Button patrolling the area.

1943

2 Jan. While we were sitting in Button I heard the Rose Bowl game with GA winning 9 to 0 from UCLA. We steamed out at 11 AM.

3-4 Jan. We joined transports carrying soldiers to relieve the Marines on Guadalcanal. Two other destroyers and three cruisers left the rest at dark and headed to New Georgia.

5 Jan. As we headed into New Georgia there was a U.S. sub that was half submerged, the decks were awash. She had a very dim red light that indicated how we should go in. If we had challenged her at all, she would have opened fire as there was no communication at all. We shelled the Japanese Air Base at Munda at 1:35 AM. There wasn't any trouble and we headed back to Guadalcanal at high speed where we joined the other ships at 7:30 AM. Jap bombers and fighters were intercepted by our fighters, but four bombers came over at 8:30 AM. An Australian cruiser was hit aft.

6-7 Jan. After covering the transports we steamed back to Button.

9-10 Jan. New Caledonia was our next stop where we tied up to the Whitney in the harbor of Noumera. The harbors were small and often we tied up to another ship. It was not unusual for 3 destroyers to be tied up to one larger ship.

The Whitney and Dixie were repair ships that were called Tenders. That meant they tended to our needs. They had machine shops, etc. that could repair the things on ships. For us it meant that we could get ice cream. Destroyers didn't have ice cream as the larger ships had, so we always were happy to get it from the Tenders.

11-20 Jan. "We went to the French town of Noumera Wed. Saw the first white girls since Honolulu. Got plenty of candy and ice cream off the Whitney." I went aboard

the carrier, Saratoga and saw Tucker. I also went to church for the first time in two months.

20 Jan. '43 The ship needed the bottom scraped and fuel tank repaired so we went into dry dock. That was a floating dry dock. At large bases there were permanent ones, but these were provided for minor repairs. The ship would go in a space similar to a lock, the gate would close and the water pumped out. The ship would settle, there were supports so the ship wouldn't tip and then the bottom could be worked on. Normally, the sailors didn't do the work, but out there we had to scrap the sides. What we called the screws were the propellers.

21 Jan. We left dry dock, went to the tanker and refueled, took on supplies from the cargo ship and took on fish for the PT boats. A new executive and new doctor came on board. At 6 PM we pulled out of port. "Water plenty rough. Knight, Holliday and I all got sick."

I didn't get seasick as soon as a lot of the men. I was sick three times in three years and that is when we were in a typhoon. We would talk about greasy pork chops and other food to aggravate each other as we were sick. I would sit at the radar with a bucket between my legs and heave into that.

22-25 Jan. "Holliday and I sick Friday. Joined four other destroyers at Tulaghie Sunday. Had to unload between air raids the 25th. Robert Montgomery, the actor, came aboard."

26-30 Jan. We were at General Quarters (GQ) night and day except for a few hours each day. I sat at the air search radar screen and talked to Carpenter who did the tracking. Blanchette sat next to me and gave information to the Gunnery Officer and Skipper. When things were quiet one of us might get some coffee or doze for a few minutes while the other took over---- but we didn't leave our stations except for a very few minutes. Horseman was behind me and did surface radar.

I could see planes on the radar about 60 miles away unless they were low on the water and then I could pick them up about 20 miles away. The surface radar (SG) picked up ships, depending on the size, from 12,000 to 40,000 yards.

The guns on deck were manned by a crew and they got their bearings from our radar readings. Actually, they got them indirectly. I gave Carpenter the range and bearings. He put it on the tracking surface. After I gave him three readings and bearings, he had an approximate course and speed of the target. At that point, he gave those results to the gunnery and they put it in their computer. Then they trained "Fox Dog" (their gun control radar) on the target. Even tho the ship rocked and rolled, the guns stayed trained on the target thru the Fox Dog automatic. When they were on automatic, they fired constantly and continuously as fast as they could be loaded. The guns could also fire manually. At night or rough seas, they were usually on automatic. It was possible that some guns could be fired automatically and some manually on the same or a different target. When guns were on automatic, they fired rapidly and continually as fast as they were loaded. When it was salvo firing, all the guns fired at one time.

We shelled Jap positions on the beach at Guadalcanal. We were supporting the Marines on the island and we could see the Japs running out of the shacks or

fortifications that we shelled. We were laying off the beach as close as we could get --- less than a mile. The Japanese had lost the air base months before and American planes were moved in. The Jap planes had to come from Munda or other bases, but we were constantly under air attacks. I don't think a day went by that we didn't have an air raid. There were air raids all day and nuisance raids at night. They would come over and drop one or two bombs just to keep everyone awake.

The Radford sunk a sub the night of the 26th. A New Zealand ship rammed one sub and we picked up 2 Japs from the crew the next day. They ran the Jap sub on the beach and it was sticking up out of the water. Later we turned the Japs over to the Marines on Guadalcanal. One destroyer returned to Button.

The Skippers we had up to this point were good ones. We always hated to see them leave. Eventually, Cole, Wiley and Johnson became Admirals.

Australia had been feeding us. That meant we had a LOT of mutton! They supplied plenty of butter. Bread was made on the ship. A lot of my meals were bread and butter since I did not like the mutton----it was mutton, not lamb! When we got some peanut butter, that was a treat on the bread and butter.

Our eggs were cold storage eggs from the US---in fact, they had been in storage three or four years. They tasted terrible and smelled like rotten eggs. That was before powdered eggs.

Bacon was usually sliced and put in a pan and cooked in all the grease. Food as a rule was very greasy and there was not much choice. Our drinks consisted of distilled water and powdered lemonade and powdered milk and coffee. After a year and half I decided to try to drink coffee---just to get something different. That wasn't good either. If I went to get coffee at modified GQ, I would get it black and Frenchman liked cream and sugar in his. We shared the cup and he would really fuss when I got it and didn't doctor it up. Most of the time, Frenchman would get the coffee so he could have it like he wanted---I would drink it that way, too. I will say, that the cooks did the best they could with what they had to work with.

Something was faulty with the U.S. torpedoes at this time. Sometimes out of 5, none would explode on contact. Sometimes two out of ten would be good. That was not true of the Japanese---theirs were great as they had a longer range than ours and they would explode every time.

At that time, the Japs could put approximately 13 planes in the air to one US and had 4 or 5 warships to one of ours. They had the superiority in all phases of the war. It was only the Lord that allowed the US to win. Several times the Japs turned back when they could have won---one was at Pearl Harbor and the other was at Midway.

When we anchored at some of the islands, the natives would come to the ships in their canoes---sometimes they had bananas and they would throw them up to us on the ship. They also had trinkets that they wanted to sell or trade. I wasn't interested in any of that, so I don't know what they traded for.

1 Feb. '43 Three of us destroyers covered the landing on the northwest end of Guadalcanal behind the Japs. The Radford shot down a Jap bomber. The Dehaven was sunk by Jap bombers at 5:30. Nicholas was slightly damaged by a near miss. A bomb exploded in the water close to the ship. The Chicago was reported sunk after being hit the 29th. The LaVallette was hit by fish. 20 Jap supply and warships headed toward Guadalcanal at 10 PM.

2 Feb. The 20 Jap supply and warships went in at 1:30 AM. to unload supplies on the beach. One spotter plane was watching us, but since there were only three of us, we stayed well out of range. The PT boats were attacking the landing and unloading, but the Jap destroyers chased them out. Supposedly the PT boats sunk 3 or 4 small boats. Two PT's ran aground on Salvo. One exploded and one was missing. Seven men were in the water and we picked them up. We headed south to join the 67th.

10 Feb. We steamed south of Guadalcanal and joined the 67th, 18th and 11th task forces.

11 Feb. A sub was sighted by a patrol plane and it dropped a smoke bomb to mark the spot. We were sent to investigate. We contacted the sub and sank it with the first pattern of depth charges.

12-13 Feb. We left the 67th and joined the 68th and steamed southeast.

14 Feb, "Arrived at Rosey at 5:30 PM." Rosey was the code name for Efate Island.

15-18 Feb. We stayed in the harbor at Rosey and I went aboard the Cleveland for radar school.

19-20 Feb. "Steamed out of Rosey Friday and headed northwest."

21 Feb. "Arrived at Guadalcanal and went in to Tulaghi harbor for fuel."

22-28 Feb. We left Tulaghi on Monday night of the 22nd during an air raid and headed south where we joined carrier forces on patrol.

1-3 March "Still at sea. The 68th left and turned toward Espiritu Santos"

4 March We arrived at Button at 8:30 AM and took on supplies, ammunition and fuel. Then we steamed out at 25 K to Guadalcanal.

The normal speed of a destroyer was 15-20 K, but the top speed was about 38 K. A Knot is about 1 1/8 MPH. Actually, the destroyers were the fastest ships and the PT boats could go 60 K.

Destroyers were called cans or tin cans because the sides were so thin. They were built for speed and didn't have armor plating on them. The larger the ship, the more armor plating they had. Our ship had 5 turrets of 5" guns and one gun in each turret.

A Battleship was the largest ship and had 3 turrets of three 16" guns in each one. They also had 5" guns (AA) and 40mm and 20mm. They had a large crew—over 3,000 men. The battleships could do the most damage except for air craft. They had more gun power and the longest range. They protected the carriers and did a lot of shelling on the beaches.

There were light cruisers and that had 6" batteries (turrets) and heavy cruisers with 8" batteries. They did the same things as the battleships, but weren't as large or as powerful. They also had a crew of a lot of men.

5 March '43 "Passed by Guadalcanal at 6 PM still making speed. 3 destroyers besides ourselves headed for Munda at 8 PM with 3 cruisers. PBY sighted 2 large Jap destroyers headed to New Georgia for Bougainville at 8 PM." Munda was a Japanese air base on New Georgia.

6 March We were at battle stations and at midnight we were ready for action. At 1:05 AM the cruisers opened fire on a Japanese destroyer and sunk it. Then we shelled the airport at 1:40 AM. We left at 35 K and the next morning had fighter protection, but there weren't any Jap planes. We pulled into Tulaghi at 9 AM for fuel and then back out to south of Guadalcanal.

7-8 March We were patrolling south of Guadalcanal and orders came for us to go to Noumera, New Caledonia, so we left at 8 PM.

9 March "Making 25 K on way to Noumera."

10 March We arrived in Noumera at 8:30 AM and "we put the Flag aboard the Perkins". The Flag was the commander and staff of the Task Force. The one we had was a floatation of 8 destroyers. Actually, we had a small task force at that time. A task force could be a group of one kind of ships, or a variety—depending on the situation. It never included subs.

We tied up to the Whitney and that meant more ice cream!! We also got a new doctor on board.

11 March "I went over to Saratoga to see Tucker. Some went ashore." The Saratoga was a big carrier. It was old, big and clumsy and was never in action. We wanted the Japs to know we had it, but it was always back behind the war zone.

12 March "Pulled away from Whitney at 12:30 PM and met two cargo ships outside harbor and headed for Button".

13-14 March "Slow trip at 10 K to Button." The cargo ships couldn't go very fast. 15 K was fast for them. Many went 8 K.

15 March "Arrived in Button at 9 AM. Went aboard Dixie for sound gear parts".

16-17 March "Sitting in Button getting ready to go to Tulaghi."

18 March "Pulled out with 4 cargo ships for Guadalcanal." Both the US and Japs were on Guadalcanal, but not many Japs were left. We operated out of the island and patrolled it.

19 March "Everything quiet."

20 March Sat. "Jap planes contacted at 10:30 AM. Japs dropped bombs at 11 AM. Landed away from cargo ships and no damage."

21-22 March "Arrived Guadalcanal at 8:30 Monday and cargo ships began unloading that night in Tulaghi. On patrol all day and sometimes at night."

23 March "Patrolled between Guadalcanal and Tulaghi. Air raid at 8:30 PM. All clear at 12:30 AM."

24-25 March "Still with cargo ships in harbor at Tulaghi and night unloading --- at Guadalcanal all day. One sailor killed on Guadalcanal by shell. Numerous air raids day and night."

26 March '43 "Dispatched from cargo ships in Tulaghi all day and under way at 8 PM. Carried supply ships to Russell Island."

27 March "Arrived Russell Island midnight, left at 2 AM, back to Tulaghi at 7 AM for fuel and supplies and then rest."

28 March "Out to Russell at 12:30 AM and picked up LCT (Landing Craft Tank) boats and returned to Tulaghi"

29 March "In harbor until fueled at 5 PM, then to Russell".

30-31 March "Back from Russell and anchored in Tulaghi."

1 April "Task Force 18 came in and anchored in Tulaghi. First bananas since San Diego."

2 April "Anchored all morning in entrance of harbor. For second day started out with cruisers. Yesterday we got only to entrance then turned back. Today headed to shell New Georgia, then ordered back after a few miles and engagement cancelled."

3 April "Over to Guadalcanal and back to Tulaghi for night."

4 April "In harbor all day."

5 April "At Guadalcanal until 6 PM. Then out at 2:30 AM to Russell."

6 April "Back to Guadalcanal for supplies and to Tulaghi for fuel and joined the 18th. Got mail—first in many weeks. Then out to New Georgia."

7 April "Back to Tulaghi for fuel. Air attack at noon. There were 60 Jap planes and we pulled out to sea. Shot down one of our planes at 3:23 PM --we picked up pilot of SBD (dive bomber), but he was dead. Tanker in Tulaghi reported sunk. Headed south of Guadalcanal. Munda cancelled." We were under attack for hours.

It was reported that 120 Jap planes were on their way and there were 60 over us. We only had 15 or 20 US planes to fight them.

We were under attack and our planes were supposed to circle the ship once and come in on port bow. This plane came straight in on our starboard bow and had a bomb underneath him. We didn't open up with gunfire until he was about 2000 yards, then everything was on him. After we opened fire, he threw up his wing where we could see the white star, but it was too late.

8 April "Patrolling southeast of Guadalcanal. Joined carrier and buried pilot at 10:37 AM. 16 got off a tanker that was sunk the 7th. My morale is low."

9 April "Still SE of Guadalcanal. Boy jumped overboard from the cruiser, St. Louis. Not found. Headed for Button."

10 April "Came in Button. 26 bags of mail. I got quite a few letters."

We were always glad to get mail. We went anywhere from 6 weeks to 3 months without mail, so it was a treat when it came!

11-12 April "Captain left. We're alongside Dixie."

13 April "Admiral came aboard and praised us."

14-16 April "Alongside a ship. Fri. Went ashore and saw Sam Knight's brother in law."

17 April "Left for Noumera at 8 AM"

18 April "Got in Noumera at 1 PM Sunday."

19 April "Left Noumera at 2 PM for Australia."

20 April "Should be in Sydney Friday."

21 April '43 "Rough as hell, sick all day." We were in a typhoon.

22 April "Still rough, but not like yesterday. Should be in Sydney tomorrow. Put in Flight check." I was still supposed to be in Flight Training!!!!

23 April Arrived at dock at 2 PM. Two thirds of crew on liberty. I go tomorrow. Plenty of milk and ice cream."

24 April Sydney was closed until Monday for the Easter Holidays. I was walking in town and saw two girls and asked them if three would be a crowd. They replied, "I don't think so." I joined them. They were sisters, Lorna and Shirley Byrnes. Lorna and I went to a movie, ate and talked. I got back to the ship at 1 AM.

25 April Sunday "I met Lorna at 3 PM, saw a parade and looked over the town. Ate and then went to the park and talked."

26 April "On board ship all day and nothing much happening. Made appointment for my physical exam for Flight Training."

27 April "Took my physical exam and in good shape. Had pictures made and saw town. Met Lorna and went home with her for tea and dinner. Really swell people. Rode the midnight train. Went to Red Cross and got first Coca Cola in 7 months."

I went to a photographer to have my picture taken in my uniform and sent home. I traded 5 or 6 cartons of cigarettes for the all pictures. The train was a subway from Lorna's home to downtown.

28 April My teeth were not in good shape. My gums bled a lot and that was a problem for quite a few years. The doctor said it was because of the diet and lacking fruits and vegetables.

I went to the movie and missed Lorna at 5 PM, so went to the subway station where I met her later. We had hot dogs and talked and then back to the ship. I paid another visit to the Red Cross for more Coke!

29 April "Finished physical exam o.k. and signed by RAAF. Pressing my blues." The Royal Australian Air Force was doing the physicals for the US.

30 April "Met Lorna at 5:30 PM, had dinner, show and looked around."

1 May Sat. "Met Lorna at 12:30, had dinner and saw proofs of the pictures, then we went to the movie, then to Lorna's home for tea and talked."

2 May Sun. "Clotworthy stood duty for me. May get underway Mon. Had dinner and went out to Lorna's at 2 PM. Shirley, Lorna and I walked over to new US hospital and really enjoyed the afternoon. Listened to radio and had quite a chat that night. Shirley's boy friend was over."

3 May "Liberty up at 11 PM. Met Lorna and I went home for tea. She wrote to my mother today. We had quite a talk. Saw Shirley as I was leaving. Back on board at 2358." I was late, but I was also the first one back on board ship. I appreciated Lorna writing my mother since I couldn't say where I was, but she could.

The people in Australia were very friendly to the Americans and they were nice. I liked the country and felt if I ever left the US, Australia is where I would go.

4 May "Ready to leave at 6 AM and underway at 7:55. Out of harbor at 1 PM. Land faded out 3 PM and headed for Noumera." Everyone was back on ship, but one man and he was left in Australia.

5 May '43 "Sub contact at 9 AM, dropped two depth charges, but failed to get him. Nicholas (ship) left about 9 PM." The next two days we were on our way to Noumera and the sea was smooth.

8-9 May "Left Whitney at entrance of Noumera and proceeded to Button. Got to Button Monday morning to stay only a few hours."

10 May "Arrived in Button 10:30 PM and fueled. Tied up to other destroyers until Tuesday morning when we are to leave at 5:30 AM. Mr. Hughes too busy to sign letter." When we went into a harbor, the first thing we always did was refuel.

11 May "Steamed out at 5:30 AM with 6 other destroyers and 4 cruisers for New Georgia. Got no mail in Button. It had been sent to Noumera."

12 May "Reached Guadalcanal at 4 PM and split up. The St. Louis, Jenkins and us headed for Munda and 3 cruisers and 5 cans (destroyers) headed to Villia. Went to GQ at 11 PM."

13 May "Opened bombardment at 1:04 AM. The other force opened one minute before us. We had no trouble except the St. Louis had trouble making 30 K. Jap planes sighted at 12:30 PM by Guadalcanal. We are 100 miles south. Dogfight over Russell and one of our own planes shot down by another US plane. No one reached us. Went to Button at 25 K".

14 May "Buried the Nashville (cruiser) dead at sea at 9 AM. Got in Button 4 PM. 28 bags of mail came on board."

15 May "In Button. Got total of 40 letters. 19 dead on Nashville and 6 Expected to die."

16-17 May "In Button. 8 more bags of mail. I signed my letter (for Flight Training) today and Mr. Hughes O.K it."

18 May "Underway from Button at 8:30 AM. Picked up plane transport at 12:30. We are to leave her at 9:30 PM and she is on her way to the States. Turned south for Efate."

19 May "Started in Rosey at 6:15 AM. At 6:30 turned and headed northeast to pick up survivors of a torpedoed ship. Made 34 K until sighting them at 3:30 PM. 62 in all and 14 Navy boys. On arrival, found only 2 killed. Turned south and went to look for another torpedoed ship."

20 May "Carried 3 survivors to hospital at Efate. Fueled and got parts at Rosey. Left 12:30 and made 35 K to get to Button at 6 PM. PBY narrowly missed us as we went to fuel." The Curtiss was a Sea Plane Tender and a plane took off in the harbor and just missed us.

21 May "Anchored in Button. Captain refused to sign my papers."

22 May "The Captain reconsidered and signed my papers and they are off by air mail. Getting underway for practice maneuvers tomorrow."

23 May "Out at 8 AM, fired on sleeve all morning and practiced torpedoes all afternoon. Returned to Button at 6 PM. Jap plane came over at 12:30 AM and dropped bombs which fell in the water and no damage." A sleeve was a target pulled by a plane for anti air craft practice firing from the ship.

24 May "Back out at 7 AM for more practice firing, then back in Button at 3 PM. Fueled and anchored."

25-26 May '43 "In Button at anchor. Nashville and 7 others left for repairs. Jap plane dropped bombs in harbor at 12:30 AM on the 26th. No damage."

27-29 May We were in Button and a couple "cans" went out to investigate sub contact, results unknown.

30 May "Still in Button. USS John Penn (supply ship) came in at 1 PM and I went aboard and saw Son. They came in from Noumera. They just got back from 4 weeks in New Zealand. He doesn't like the Navy very much—can't say I blame him. A hell of a ship he is on. I left at 8:30 PM. We're getting underway at 7 AM Monday." The regulations on the Penn were very strict and they couldn't get off the ship. I asked our Skipper to go to the Penn and he not only let me, but sent a boat to take me. That was the good part of being a smaller ship.

31 May "Out at 7 AM on practice firing all day. Son's ship steamed out, fully loaded with troops, probably for Guadalcanal."

June The first few days we were anchored in Button. One day I went ashore and had a nice trip around the island. We also did more practice firing.

8 June "In Button. To go out early tomorrow morning. Hope we are going somewhere. This sitting around is too much to take."

9 June All the Task Force went out for practice firing and then went out and headed SE. We picked up a Merchant Ship. I saw a volcano at 6 PM on Ambrim Island. The bearings in the starboard shaft burned out so we made 16K.

10 June The Fletcher turned back at 1 PM and went to Button. One screw on a propeller was broken, so 15 K was our top speed.

11 June "We arrived at Button and went alongside the Dixie for repairs. Earlier, 4 planes—TBF (Torpedo bomber), SBD (dive bomber), and 2 F4F (fighters) crashed. Found one guy and we picked him up."

We stayed alongside the Dixie for repairs and they were trying to determine what to do about the shaft. I went to church on the Dixie and it was the first time since Feb that we were able to go to church.

We went into dry dock and they decided we would go back to the States. They took the screw off and put it on deck, so it wouldn't drag. We unloaded ammunition and any food that others could use. Fifty men came aboard for transportation to Pearl. We had GQ at 5:30 AM while we were in dry dock.

19 June "Out of Button at 6 AM and headed for Pago Pago in Somoa--- 1320 miles. Making 18 1/2 K." We arrived in Pago Pago Monday morning. There were some really beautiful moonlight nights.

20 June We had two Sundays in a row as we crossed the date line (180 degrees). Windy, a real "swell" fellow, was killed. They were working with the high 40mm (anti air craft gun) and the barrel came down and crushed him. His spinal cord was broken and he died in about ten minutes.

21 June "Pulled in Pago Pago and tied up to dock at 9:30 AM. Most beautiful island I have seen out here. The natives are light brown, speak English. One girl really swell looking. She had a 4-0 (top grade) figure. Carried Windy's body ashore for burial. This ice cream tastes like it was made with muddy water. Steamed out at 12:30

PM and headed for Honolulu, 2300 miles away. Be there sometime Sunday." On the way there we crossed the Equator on the 23rd.

27 June '43 "Arrived at Pearl Harbor 9 AM and tied up to fuel dock. Hutching (destroyer) here to be repaired. She fired her # 3 gun into her own smoke stack and killed 12 men. Went to Honolulu and got quite a few things and then went to recreation center at base for food, etc. Boy, it was good. Had 30 letters."

28 June "Left Pearl Harbor at 11:30 AM. Arizona salvage almost complete and Oklahoma raised to main deck. Picked up nine ships to convoy to Frisco. Making 9 K on course, get there about 8 July."

We were actually going about 15 K, but we were zig zagging so we wouldn't get hit by torpedoes, and that made 9 K on course. It was a great feeling to be going back to the States!!

The next day one ship lagged behind, another was dead in the water. The next day another lagged behind. In a convoy we went at one speed and if a ship couldn't keep up, we left it. The whole convoy couldn't be endangered because of one ship. Those were tough decisions, but they had to be made. Actually, the ship that was dead in the water caught up with us several days later. We covered about 200 miles a day.

6 July We learned that the Helena, the best cruiser we had, and the Story, a destroyer, were sunk at New Georgia. That was the place we had shelled so many times, but the Japs met them that day!

8 July "Foggy as heck. Cleared as we went under Golden Gate Bridge. Got to Mare Island at noon. Unloaded ammunition then up to repair dock. Had duty tonight." That was a GREAT feeling going under the Golden Gate Bridge!! It gave me a wonderful feeling all over. By the same token, when we went under it going out, I wondered what was in store for me and if I would ever see it again.

9 July Clotworthy wanted to take me to a great place to eat—we went to Chinatown. It was my first Chinese experience and he ordered Chop Suey for me. I did NOT like it!! I went somewhere else and got food after he had finished eating. It was years before I realized there was other food that I liked at a Chinese Restaurant.

10 July We were told we had 6 days leave and I wanted to fly home. I tried to make plane reservations as that was the only way I could make it. There was nothing available for 3 or 4 days, so I couldn't go. After the 6 days, they gave us 6 more----the ship wasn't ready. If I had had 12 days from the beginning, I could have gone home.

11 July I wanted to see what Sacramento was like—it was smaller and the Capitol of California and I went to a hotel there. I was in Sacramento for ten days and I would go to the USO dances---met Ray, and did things with him and also met quite a few girls. "Met one girl that talked all the time. What a girl." I didn't see her again, but I dated Julia. She took me to a movie----I didn't realize until we sat down that it was all in Spanish! Her uncle owned the theater and we got in free. She also took me to her home. She was a very good looking girl, but all of the women in her family were very, very heavy---I figured she would be too as she aged. I also dated Carolyn, Rose and Cleo. "Cleo and I spent the afternoon in the park. Carolyn and I had a date that night until 11PM, then I met Cleo."

Ray took me to an Italian restaurant that served the food in courses. It was the first time I had ever been to anything like that. I was stuffed when we left!

20 July '43 "Came aboard ship at 4 AM. Lots of changes. 18 men were on board."

21-23 July Clotworthy and I went to Frisco and saw some movies and also went to Sacramento and I saw Cleo and Carolyn again.

24 July "Duty today and tomorrow. Janet Gaynor (a movie star) here today to sell war bonds."

The next week I went to Sacramento many times—sometimes to see Cleo, sometimes I met Ray and sometimes to see a couple other girls. After that I saw Cleo most of the time.

14 Aug. "Pulled out of Mare Island at 9 AM, headed for Frisco. Steamed around bay calibrating the radar, then into dock." I had liberty that evening.

15 Aug. Sun. "Pulled out from dock at 7 AM checking ship's radar in bay. Anchored in bay at 5 PM. Beautiful night sitting in the bay with all the lights from cities and the full moon. Make a speed run tomorrow."

16 Aug. "Few more fellows failed to return to ship. Out at 8 AM under Bridge at 9 AM. Made 4 hour high speed run and firing practice and back in at 4 PM. Liberty. I called Cleo and her mother had died Sat. night. Went to Frisco. Had a letter from Ernestine about her father's death."

17 Aug. "Pulled out for Frisco and met St. Louis coming in with bow Blown off. Gave Zoot \$5 for a 51 Parker Pen. Pulled in and at 5 PM half boys had liberty. Boys jumping ship all night."

18 Aug. "15 men failed to show up at Muster. Some came back during the day. Had liberty tonight."

19 Aug. "There will be no liberty tonight. Pulled away from dock at 3 PM, anchored in bay. A pretty sight with all the lights and moon. Leaving tomorrow with convoy to Honolulu."

20 Aug. "Went under the Golden Gate at 10 AM. A fellow told me it was not such a pleasant sight as you passed back out. One boy over the hill---making 31 not showing up. 3 cargo and 1 DE (small destroyer) making 12 K towards Honolulu. Probably convoy duty for 2 to 3 months."

21 Aug. "Sea smooth except for a few large swells. Some of the new boys feeling sick."

22 Aug. Sun. "Good many of the new boys sea sick. Funny to me now. Captain holding mass for all Frisco cases. 28 men broken one rank. Weather getting warmer—hate to see the cool air leave." Mass was the Captain's court and he dealt with those who had offenses.

23 Aug. "Go to routine GQ each morning. Still haven't gotten in the groove. 1140 miles to go at 8 PM.

24 Aug. "The weather is really hot now. The same old routine."

25 Aug. "When we go to GQ the soldiers man the starboard rail of the transport. (In other words, the soldiers on transport, just stood along the rail and watched.) 540 miles at 8 PM from Honolulu. Going up for second class Friday."

I made third class about Feb. of '43. For second class, I had to take an exam.

27 Aug. '43 The troop transport had some engine trouble on the way. We had radar contact with land at 3 AM at 103 miles. We sighted land at dawn and tied up at dock in Honolulu at 1 PM. We refueled and then tied up to the tender, Cascade. I took the second class exam.

28 Aug. The cruisers, battleships and all "cans" left the Sunday before---about 60 ships. There were only a few ships in the harbor. That was the first time that we had ships in the South Pacific and it was great. The new "Lex" (Lexington, a aircraft carrier), Yorktown and others were in port.

This Skipper wasn't the guy he should be. We were tied up to a tender and we couldn't go aboard her unless we had a reason. The other Skippers would let us. We had liberty from 10 AM to 1800 and expected to be there two weeks.

29 Aug. Sun. "Clotworthy and I went on liberty together. Went to Waikiki Beach and up on side of mountain to see some of his friends from California. Had a few odd pictures made. Looked over the city and at the ship. Found out that Clotworthy was transferred to a Flag on shore (Halsey's Flag of the 8th fleet) and will leave early tomorrow morning. We're going out for practice firing and runs on subs."

30 Aug. "Out at 8 AM with sub for practice runs. 2 SBD's (dive bombers) collided in air about 10 AM. Picked up one pilot and one gunner. Saw pieces of flesh float in the water. One SBD fell yesterday --it had just taken off and fell in a sugar cane field. Both fellows walked away. Made runs on sub and back in at 6 PM."

31 Aug. "Out at 8 AM practice firing on a target towed by another destroyer. Back in at 5 PM. New Orleans back in harbor and repaired after being damaged in Nov. '42."

1 Sept. "Out at 8 AM and made practice run on sub. Tracked a PT boat. Learned of attack on Jap Island, Marcus, by aircraft and ships that left just before we arrived."

2 Sept. We went out at 8 AM and escorted the Honolulu out of the harbor as it was making a trip to the States. We accompanied her into open water in case there was a sub and we could attack it.

At the entrance of Pearl Harbor a metal net with floats was pulled across at sunset and nothing could go in or out. It was opened at sunrise each day.

"The Skipper didn't rate us, afraid he would lose us. My opinion of him goes lower each day as does all the rest of the boys. Made a run on a sub and had a direct hit. Back into dock at 6 PM."

3 Sept. "Out at 7 AM and made torpedo runs on destroyer. This Skipper is the dumbest and stupidest devil I have ever seen. He does everything to keep the boys on ship. That's a dirty thing to do in the Navy. Back to dock at 6 PM. Out Monday for an operation with carrier."

4 Sept. "Out 6:30 AM with subs. They made runs on us. Tied up to the Cascade at 6 PM"

5 Sept. '43 Sun. "Out at 9 AM with PT boats and back at 4 PM. Played the officers in softball. Skipper made Commander--no one deserved it less. Sent 2 radiomen to Radar school. Got a letter from Son in 131 Receiving Station."

Son's ship sunk and he was at the receiving station waiting for orders.

6 Sept. "Out at noon for firing practice. Sub sighted by a plane 90 miles south. Back in 6 PM"

7 Sept. "Went ashore on liberty. Task Force of 2 cruisers, 3 carriers, 1 battleship and 10 "cans" back in from Marcus. No damage to any of them."

When we saw all the ships, for the FIRST time I felt we could win the war!!! It was a wonderful feeling to see all the ships and feel we had something with which to meet the Japs and fight. It was a GREAT feeling!!!!

9 Sept. "Went over to Honolulu and played ball. Met Clotworthy and he and I went to canteen and around center. Also heard on the radio that Italy had surrendered. Moved away from the Cascade and anchored in harbor."

10 Sept. "Went on liberty and met Clotworthy. Out to Waikiki and then town. Went aboard New Orleans and saw fellows I knew."

11 Sept. I went to the fleet landing and went to the sub and had Sonar class. The girl there fed me anything I wanted.

12 Sept. Sun. "Went to Richman Center, met Clotworthy and ate plenty of ice cream."

13 Sept. "Out at 9 AM, made run with planes all morning, practice firing all afternoon and night. GQ until midnight."

14 Sept. "Sleeve firing all morning. In Pearl at 2 PM. Minneapolis (cruiser) came in behind us. Get underway tomorrow morning for all points south."

15 Sept. "Underway at 9 AM with two "cans" headed south to Figi. It feels good to get back to sea. Made a dollar bet with Knight that I would be aboard a month from now." I was still supposed to be going to Flight Training.

16 Sept. We were going to Figi, 3,000 miles away and were making 19 K. We crossed the Equator the 18th---that meant the Polliwogs got initiated. A Polliwog is someone who has not crossed the Equator. The initiation consists of crazy things---they were greased, dressed up and there was a King Neptune that they had to serve. It lasted for 3 or 4 hours. I was fortunate in the fact that the first time I crossed the Equator we were at GQ and didn't have time for the initiation.

The Skipper is still an "old lady."

We crossed the date line again. Two SBD (dive bombers) came over. There was an attack on the Marshall Islands.

22 Sept. "Sea a little rough, large swells, making 18 K. Be in Suva tomorrow around 4 PM. I get more disgusted with the Navy each day. We watch the dumbnitty Skipper and Exec. Read where the Navy wants pilots, but haven't heard anything from mine and it's been four months---probably never will."

Suva was the capital of the Figi Islands. "The Thatcher left and two ships left at 5 AM. Land on all sides. Reached Suva at 3 PM, tied up to LaVallette. Liberty for 3rd section. Nice looking place."

23 Sept. '43 "Our liberty 1 PM to 11 PM. Few white people, plenty of ice cream etc. Saw one swell looking girl. Went to movie." Ray Allen and I looked around the island---we hitchhiked with the military. If a truck was going the way we wanted to go, we went along. It was interesting.

24 Sept. '43 "LaVallette out at day light. Liberty 9 AM -1PM. Read in newspaper the John Penn was sunk. Glad Son got off o.k. Skipper came down and talked to Allen and me. Underway 5 PM. Will meet a transport. Going to Noumea making 15 K."

25 Sept. "Speed 28 K. At 7:30 AM we met transport Haywood and proceeding to Noumea at 15 K. Sub reported 100 miles ahead at 11 AM."

27 Sept. It was getting cool and I pulled out a blanket. Land was in sight at daylight and we pulled alongside a tanker at noon. We anchored in Noumea and there was nothing but transports around and a few destroyers. We pulled out with the Haywood again at 4 PM to take her 150 miles toward New Zealand.

28 Sept. "Left Haywood at 4 AM and headed back for Noumea and entered port at 5 PM. Fueled and then tied up to Standby, DD (destroyer). This Skipper gets more stupider each day."

29 Sept. "In harbor all day. Liberty for 2nd section. Frenchie (Blanchette) and I went ashore—ice cream, etc. Needed radar parts. Got roasted peanuts and saw a movie"

When we pulled into port, I usually went ashore. I wanted to get off the ship and I was "guard mail PO". I carried a 45 pistol and got the official and special mail for the ship. One time I went to Noumea with the Pay Master and we picked up a couple hundred thousand dollars for pay. At the place the Navy had the money to pay the fleet, there was 7 Million Dollars stacked in a vault. Needless to say, I had never seen that much money before!

For about the first year and half I was in the Pacific when we got paid, the bills had Hawaii printed on them. It was printed across the back and on each end of the front. Part of the face of the bill was brown instead of green. The reason for it was if the Japanese had captured any great amount of money, they could declare it null and void.

30 Sept. "Over to Noumea at 8 AM for parts. Out of port at 1 PM, with one transport headed southeast at 16 K."

1 Oct. "Left transport at 6 AM going SE. Met 2 transports and Stanley at 2:30 PM heading north at 13 K. Solomons, here we come."

2 Oct. "Met can, Balch, and another transport at noon—five day trip."

3 Oct. Sun. "Met 4 cans at 7 AM searching for sub contacts the night before. The Captain gave a fellow 10 days in the brig for leaving his watch (duty) and going to sleep—he had been warned before. 14 K. Met can, DE (small destroyer) and two more transports out of Button at 4 PM. DE turned back at 5 PM. 4 cans and 5 transports left in group. GQ at 9 PM as transport sighted a torpedo wake."

4 Oct. "GQ at 11 AM to 1 PM Jap bombers in the vicinity. Attacked ship 160 miles away. Gotten hot as the devil."

5 Oct. "What a celebration—I am 22 today on my way to Munda and points north! Left 4 transports on Guadalcanal at 2 PM. The others to Tulaghi. Anchored outside going to Russell early tomorrow morning. We fueled and then anchored in the harbor."

6 Oct. '43 "Out at 2 AM to Guadalcanal. Picked up 3 LST's at 5 AM headed to Vella Lavella with Sanford. Joined at 1 PM by 5 APD's (transports) and 3 DD's (destroyers). Another can & LST at 6 PM. 3 cans left shortly after dark. GQ at 11 PM to midnight enemy planes around."

7 Oct. "1 AM got dispatch that 2 cans were hit by torpedoes and by shell fire. At least one sunk. We turned back at 3 AM. Enemy planes (75) and ships at Vella Lavella. We were only 20 miles from our destination and 40 miles from the ships that were hit. Turned back at 3:30 PM for Vella Lavella. 8 1/2 K. Met O'Bannon at 4 PM. The O'Bannon hit the aft end of Chevalier. Selfridge hit by torpedoes and Charleston hit and sunk by torpedoes. O'Bannon rammed Chevalier after being hit. Met Selfridge at 8 PM being towed—hole in bow. 8 enemy planes attacked Vella Lavella and Munda early this morning. We reached and began unloading at Vella Lavella at 6 AM and returned with APD to Munda at 7. Munda shot up around air field. Back to Vella Lavella at 1 PM. Out with LST at 2:30 PM. GQ 1-3 PM. Jap planes in the vicinity."

8 Oct. "Making 9 K. One APD (transport) brought back 28 men from off a LST that the Japs sank. GQ from 8 PM-10 PM. Japs bombed Munda and 2 other points. We could see the firing." The US had taken Munda by then.

9 Oct. "In by Savo at noon. Tulaghi at 2 PM. 450 (ship) had bow bent down 3 ft. Selfridge's bow off from front of gun # 2 to edge of bridge. 45 men lost. 451 (ship) had to be sunk by 448 (ship). GQ in port a couple times. We are on 10 minutes notice to get underway."

Savo was just a mountain peak that stuck up out of the water to the north end of Guadalcanal—which had no harbor. Tulaghi was the harbor about 15 miles from Guadalcanal, east of Savo.

10 Oct. Sun. "On 10 minutes notice to get underway. O'Bannon, Selfridge and Chevalier sank 4 destroyers and damaged another one out of 1 cruiser and 8 cans. Swimming yesterday and today. Two other cans alongside tender with bow smashed in."

11 Oct. "Still anchored. This ship gets worse each day. Showers on only half hour each day and wash face one hour each day---like a prison."

12 Oct. "Out at 9 AM with 3 other cans for maneuvers. Back in at 2 PM. Commodore been aboard 3 days and seems to be a swell guy."

Our Skipper had been teaching at a Military School, but he wasn't a good skipper. He didn't understand military strategy. He didn't know how to handle the ship—he couldn't get in and would bump other ships and the dock. He should have stayed on shore. We had a fathometer on the ship which measured the depth of the water between the keel to the ocean floor. He ignored it and the warnings from the men and almost ran us aground going into Pearl—we were down to 3 fathoms.

13 Oct. "Anchored. Most all the other able ships are out today. Got a couple letters. Wonder how Joe and Myrt and family are. Swimming."

14 Oct. "Other ships gone to Efate Island, only LaVallette and us left in beside a smaller ship.

15 Oct. '43 "Fueled from a barge tanker. Tanker that was hit out of Sydney came in. Other cans returned from Vella Lavella."

16 Oct. "Sea plane tender in. O'Bannon and Patterson out for USA."

17 Oct. Sun. "Church on Lyons Point entrance of the harbor. APD's (transport) out at daylight. We went out at 1 PM to Guadalcanal to take up stations while the Americans began boarding. We patrolled the Straits (between Guadalcanal and Savo) all night."

18 Oct. "Patrol all day off Lunga. 93 planes came in about 1 PM raiding Bougainville. We were south of Guadalcanal all night."

19 Oct. "Back to Lunga at daylight. Planes out all morning—bombers. In Tulaghi at 2 PM, unloaded rounds of ammunition and out at 4 PM. Got mail. Office got a letter and my aviation application has to be made all over. This damn Navy is a hell of a mess. Leave here tomorrow for Efate. Joe and Dirt (Myrt) have a 6 lb. Girl born Oct. 1."

20 Oct. "Left 5 AM. 4 cans and 4 transport at 14 K for Efate. Skipper is as dumb as they come. Should be back in the CCC camps. Unidentified air craft into 9 miles and no GQ until Commodore came in and ordered it."

22 Oct. "Left transport at 6 AM. Nicholas went to Button to get mail. Four battleships in harbor at 7:30 AM."

23 Oct. Out of Efate at 6 AM. Met Nicholas who sent message that she had a large quantity of mail for us, but we couldn't stop to get it. Met. Ala, LaVallette and Radford outside harbor for firing practice all day. GQ until 9PM."

24 Oct. Sun. "GQ at 4:30 AM for practice run. Left cans and Ala at 6 AM for Efate. Picked up sub at 9:30 AM and made a run until 3 PM. In Efate at 4:30 PM alongside Nicholas and got 12 bags mail. Out at 5:30 PM for Button."

When we made sub runs, we would track it, try to make contact and drop depth charges. We would chase it until we hit it or lost it.

25 Oct. "In Espiritu Santos at 6 AM. Sent Son a message because he couldn't get over. Loaded 3,000-- 5", 50,000—20mm and 100 cases of 40mm ammunition. Out of Button at 5:30 PM. Sound contact at 11 PM between islands."

When sound contact was made it usually meant a sub. That time it wasn't.

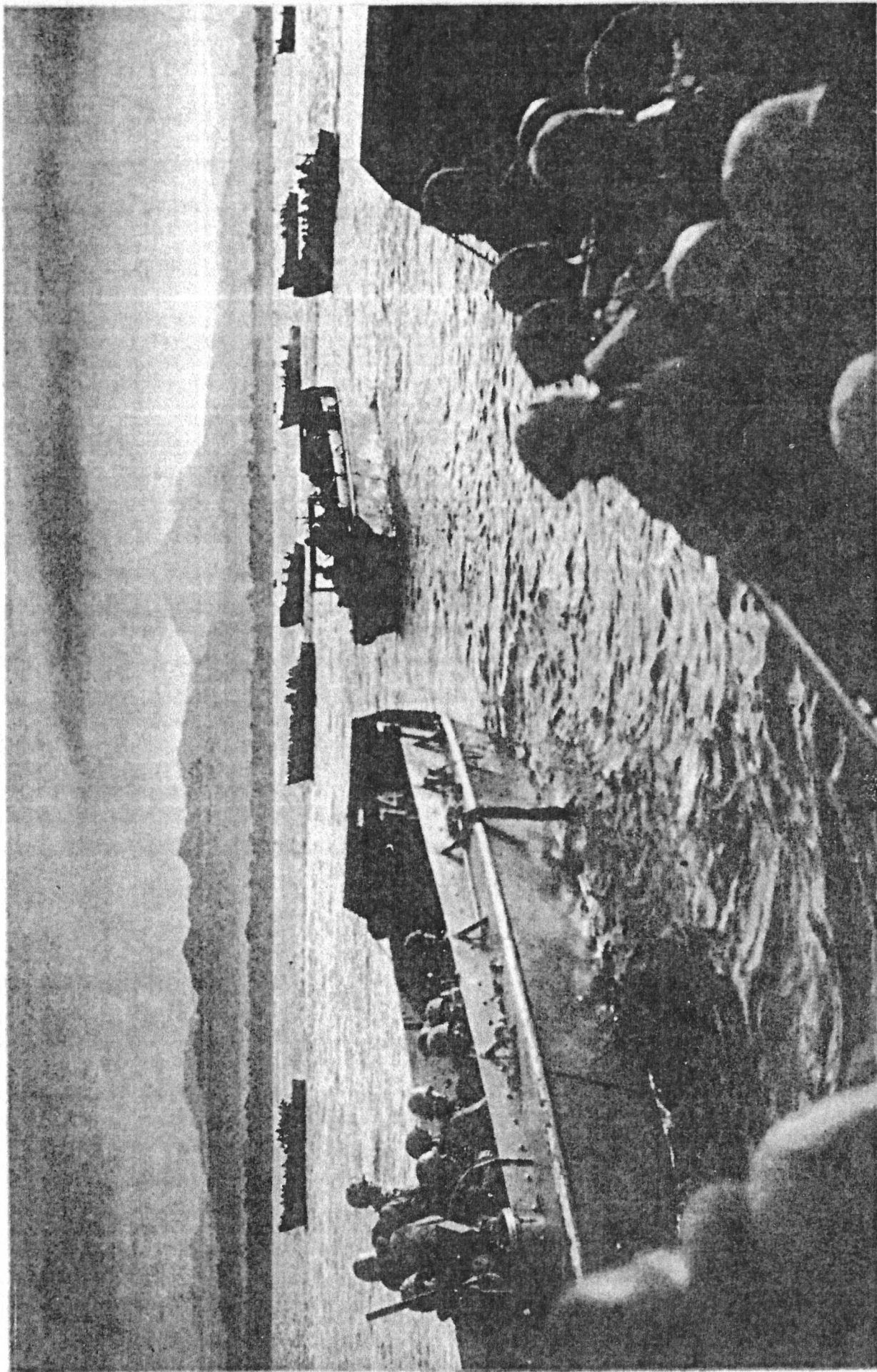
26 Oct. "In Efate at 6 AM had GQ at 4:13 AM—unidentified ship. Turned out to be a friendly tanker. Went alongside Mass. and gave her ammunition, then alongside LaVallette at tender. Went ashore to Attack Teachers (Sonar training) and to the recreation center. Out of Efate at 5:30 PM. An urgent message from the Washington stated that she had been fired upon by sub. Met her and brought her to port and then went hunting for sub."

27 Oct. "Three cans searching all day for sub. No soap. In Efate at 6 PM. Fueled and stayed alongside all night."

28 Oct. "Went alongside ammunition ship. I went to tender Mudusa and then over on shore and back to ship at 2 PM. Great to walk on land again! Alongside tender to unload ammunition and then alongside Jenkins and Radford at 6 PM."

29 Oct. "Went to Attack Teachers (Sonar Training) at 1 PM. Got a number of letters in mail."

30 Oct. "Went aboard a ship and got candy, etc. Made 2nd class RdM. (Radarman). Been raining last two or three days. Pulling out tomorrow."



MARINES LANDED ON BOUGAINVILLE AT EMPRESS AUGUSTA BAY AND SEIZED JUST ENOUGH OF THE MUCKY ISLAND TO BUILD THREE AIRSTRIPS

31 Oct. '43 Sun. "Out at 7 AM with 4 battleships and 5 cans. Rough as heck. Sick all afternoon. Everyone is sick." Another typhoon.

1 Nov. "Roaming around waiting for other ships—4 battleships, 6 cans. Japs are going to see trouble soon."

2 Nov. "We have been relieved from South Pacific and assigned to Central Pacific Force. Old Task Force 39 in battle last night—lost one can, Fuller, I think. 70 planes raided them with 10 cruisers and 8 cans. Hollywood Task Force in action. Landed troops on Bougainville. Joined 21 other ships at 7 AM today—4 battleships, 4 cruisers, 3 carriers and 12 cans."

3 Nov. "Roaming around between Efate and Figi. Making all kinds of drills, etc."

4 Nov. "Steaming in circles as usual. 3 cruisers and 4 cans left at 1 AM to go and help at Bougainville. Would rather be there than here. Think we go in Sun. Japs lost 1 cruiser and 4 cans, US claims. Denver took four 8" hits and took a torpedo in stern. Captain Brisco a good guy." He started out as a seaman and advanced to the rank of One Star Admiral. He was a very smart military man and was about 60 years old. Robert Montgomery, the actor, was on his staff.

5 Nov. "At 6:30 AM the 3 carriers, 3 battleships and 8 cans left us. 5 battleships and 6 cans still going in circles."

When I said "going in circles" we were just outside the islands steaming around, looking for trouble and waiting to go where we were needed.

6 Nov. "Carriers in from a raid on 8 cruisers, 20 cans of the Japs--- some were hit. 8 US planes lost. We are still running around in circles. Going to Figi tomorrow."

7 Nov. Sun. "In Figi at 11 AM. Pulled along tanker with Wash. Got mail."

8 Nov. "Went ashore at 1 PM went to Lautoka (town) with Allen. Got our pictures taken. Plenty guys all soaked up." (drunk)

9 Nov. "Made two guard mail trips to Nicholas and Wash. Still in harbor."

10 Nov. "Some of the fellows coming in off liberty are in a rough way. Gives the doctor a little work. All six cans went alongside tanker at 4 PM to top off fuel and stayed there all night. Underway tomorrow."

11 Nov. "Out of harbor at 10 AM and joined by BB (battleship) at 11 AM There will be plenty of fireworks before this trip ends. Jap base at Rabaul attacked by land and carrier planes--- a heavy raid. Essex (carrier) and her task force attacked four times by Jap planes. No damage done to any ship. 251 ships is our force to hit Gilbert Islands. Will be out 45 days without supplies."

12 Nov. "Steaming NE. Will meet other ships about the 16th, fuel on the 17th and hit the Gilberts on the 20th. Japs claim to have sunk all the South Pacific force of the US. Wonder what they will say after this attack. Crossed the date line at 6:30 PM—tomorrow will be Friday also. Joined with battleship, Birmingham who took a bomb hit 5 days ago. Probably be out 45 days and fuel will be scarce."

13 Nov. "Japs bombed Funatuit Island (large base in Ellise Island) last night rather heavy. Met a carrier and 2 cans at 2:30 AM and 3 heavy cruisers and 1 AA (anti-aircraft) cruiser and 2 cans at 3 PM."

14 Nov. '43 Sun. "Crossed the equator at 3:30 AM. Steaming NE to meet ships tomorrow."

15 Nov. "At 8 AM joined forces with 6 carriers, one battleship and 6 cans and 2 tankers and 2 DE. Some ships fueled today. At 6 PM the force divided and we were left with our striking force of 3 BB, 3 carriers and 6 cans. Also a tanker and DE."

16 Nov. "Began fueling from tanker, Norasho, at 8:30 AM. Got a few bags of Christmas mail from the tanker. About 700 miles from Gilbert Islands."

17 Nov. "Fueled at 7 AM. Other carrier force staying close by—20 to 40 miles. GQ at one hour before sunrise. 550 miles from Gillberts. Crossed date line 11:45 PM 5 degrees above Equator."

18 Nov. "GQ one hour before sunrise. 400 miles from Gilberts. Steaming due west. Our forces strike tomorrow at 6 AM."

19 Nov. "GQ at 5:15 AM. Planes in the air. Attacked Makin Island at 6 AM. One plane crashed taking off carrier—pilot not found—2 other pilots picked up from planes that crashed in water. Few Jap planes over island. Three of our planes shot down, but 2 pilots saved. Second bombing at 5:30 PM. Jap torpedo planes (38) attacked south Task Force. One large Jap bomber shot down in sight of our force. 40 miles north of Makin. We are using +12 zone time therefore, today is Friday. We probably get into some port by Christmas, some think Pearl Harbor, but I don't."

20 Nov. "Troops began landing at 6:20 AM. Battleships shelled the island a few hours before until about 8 AM. Planes off at daylight. We are 30 miles west. Back and forth all day in sight of island. At 4 PM.-- 7 miles away-- very low tide, the troop ships were having trouble getting into unload—water too shallow. We saw 4 planes lost in action. One sat down in the water after dark and didn't find the pilot."

21 Nov. Sun. The planes took off to attack at daylight to knock out the Jap positions. The day before the Japs had a tremendous cross fire. There was a wharf and a partially sunken ship and the Japs had machine guns on both. They let the first wave of Marines hit the beach and when the second wave started, the Japs let loose with all their firepower. There was so much cross fire and the Marines were slaughtered at Yellow Beach #2. On the 21st there was still light machine gunfire. "2 Jap four engine bombers shot down in sight of ship—2 knocked down yesterday. Independence took two torpedoes aft and another ship hit. One fighter landed in water, but they couldn't find the pilot. We are southwest of Makin Island. Fueled from the Independence at 10 AM. Jap planes 45 miles out from 3 to 6 AM, but none came in. Torpedo bomber attacks expected to come at sunset, but didn't come."

22 Nov. "GQ as usual at 5 AM. Jap planes out at 60 miles, but none came in. We're north of Makin."

23 Nov. "5 AM, GQ. At 6 AM, 3 tankers and 2 DE's came in to fuel Task Force. We are 150 miles SE Makin and 130 miles east of Tarawa Island. Outgoing mail dropped in ocean while trying to put it on tanker. Got pretty wet. 19 days to go of 45 without supplies."

24 Nov. "North of Makin. TG (Task Group) 50.1 has five pilots of our force aboard, one injured. In all, 50.1 has shot down 46 Jap planes with loss of one

"Hellcat". Jap planes, two "Betty's"(twin engine bombers) circled over us half an hour at 9 PM. We didn't fire. DE sank sub."

25 Nov. Thanksgiving "Halfway between Gilberts and Marshalls. Jap planes came at 7 PM until 9 PM. NC shot one down, and one probable. Mass. also got one probable. Radford went in chase of sub on surface at 9 PM. Got him about midnight on third pattern." (depth charges)

26 Nov. "West of Makin Island. Picked up crew of 3 men of a TBF (torpedo fighter) that crashed at 8:30 AM—none hurt. Six rubber rafts in water sighted at 2 PM, no men. Transferred the 3 men of TBF back aboard the Belleau Wood at 4:30 PM. GQ at 6:25 PM 3 night fighters led by Lt Com "Butch" O'Hare. Jap planes came in beginning at 7:30 PM until 8 PM about 6 runs all totaled. Torpedoes passed all thru formation, but no hits. Ind., Mass., and us got one plane each. Night fighters got two. O'Hare also shot down-- safety unknown. We were hit by shrapnel from Ind. Ind. fired at 7:20 PM and one piece exploded 40 mm shell and one boy's fingers sliced and another boy's arm very badly—may lose his hand. Few more fellows hit, but not serious."

At that time, there was no such thing as night fighters. O'Hare had the idea and took 2 other pilots with him. They left the cockpit lights on so they could tell each other. We tracked the Japs and O'Hare's men on Radar and we told our men which way the Japs were coming. It was confusing to the Japs. O'Hare was killed and the airport in Chicago was named for him.

27 Nov. "GQ at 5 AM. No trouble. Quite a number of shrapnel hits throughout the ship. Holes in two charges, around torpedo tubes and cat walk by tubes, bulk heads, etc. 150 miles south of Makin. Met Essex and cruiser task force at 8 AM. Belleau Wood left with them. (On the 3rd of Dec. it was announced by TFC (Task Force Commander) that we had credit for 2 planes shot down in the attack of Nov. 27). Carriers, Saratoga and Princeton and 4 cans. We were joined by 5 cruisers and 3 cans at 2 PM. At 4 PM all BB and Saratoga left us. Our force now joined by Belleau Wood at 6 PM We are in TG 50.3----14 ships. 3 Carrier, 5 cruisers and 6 cans. No Jap planes contacted tonight."

Carriers were named for battles

Cruisers were named for cities in the US

Battleships were named for states

Tin cans were named mostly for people

Subs were named for fish

28 Nov. Sun. " SE of Tarawa Island, 200 miles SE of Makin Island. Met 4 tankers and 3 DE's. Put wounded fellows on tanker steaming NE."

29 Nov. "Steaming NE to meet another carrier force and hit the Marshall Islands. Number 32 days without supplies, 13 to go."

30 Nov. '43 Steaming E—800 miles east of Marshalls. Sea pretty rough. TBF (torpedo bomber fighter) crashed and 2 men injured. Picked up o.k."

1 Dec. "Met 2 tankers, 2 DE's, also other Task Force of 3 carriers, 5 cruisers and 6 cans. They're staying about 8 miles south of us. We're 800 miles NE of Marshall. To

strike the 4th of Dec. No landing force, we're going to try to destroy a large surface fleet gathered there."

2 Dec. '43 "Steaming NW crossed date line at 1 AM (180-14 north). Didn't change dates. Sea a little smoother. Jap force has 9 cruisers and 9 cans. We are to hit air fields on 3 islands."

3 Dec. "Steaming SW 300 miles SE of Wake and 300 miles NE of Marshalls. Start tomorrow using planes to destroy surface ships. We're to avoid surface action if possible. We have 3 subs operating and they are here to pick up men."

4 Dec. "Seem to have caught Japs by surprise. 5 Jap cruisers and 7 cargo and transport ships at Kewajalein Island. All were hit, but one cruiser able to get underway. 15 Jap planes destroyed. Sub picked up one of our pilots—one fell only 1 mile from the Japs. He's a goner. Jap planes attacked Task Force alongside us at noon. Lexington got 3 Jap planes and another ship shot down two. San Francisco got strafed (4 men killed). Our Task Force 50.3 heavily damaged 2 Jap cruisers, 3 AK (supply ships) afire, 6 Zeroes shot down, 2 Emilies (4 engine flying boats), and a number of Betty's destroyed. 3 of our planes were shot down (lost) and about 6 landed in the water around carriers. (they were either damaged or low on fuel) We're steaming NE since 8 AM. Sea is rough as heck. Today is # 38 without supplies. Jap planes attacked again at 8:30 PM. About 6 runs made on us. Mobile and San Diego got one Jap torpedo bomber each. Lexington hit in steering room aft by torpedo at 11:33 PM and unable to stay on course. Lex. Took another torpedo forward in CPO (Chief Petty Officer) quarter at 11:59 PM."

5 Dec. Sun. "Jap planes continue to make runs until 1:30 AM. No more hits. Secured from GQ at 2 AM. We had watch until 4 AM. Lex lost 2 engines making 21 K. She lost only one man and another had skull fracture. Jenkins, San Diego and us joined the New Orleans, Minneapolis and Oakland in screening Lex. At 3 PM we left to take her to Pearl Harbor. We are making 20 K going NE. Other Task Force staying close by. Sea rough and got a little sea sick. Big turkey dinner today."

When the Lex was hit aft at 11:33 PM her rudder was stuck and couldn't be steered---could only go around in circles. For about two hours two destroyers and us went around in circles with her, trying to protect her from planes. At 1 AM she got the rudder going straight. When she was going right, the other ships and us were around her to protect her. Then it was decided that we take her back to Pearl.

6 Dec. "Joined Task Force 50.1 and 50.3 with tanker at 10 AM. Sea is plenty rough. Waves still coming over the ship. Fueled from Kaskaskia at 2 PM. Steaming NE."

In rough waters the ship would rock and roll ten or twelve degrees to one side and 30 or 40 to the other side. We would go under one wave and then over the next one. When we went over, as we passed mid point of the wave, the ship would fall. The waves would go over the Fox Dog (Fire Control Radar). It was 35 feet above the deck and there would be several men up there. If you wanted to go from aft forward or visa versa, you would have to go between waves, or you would get washed overboard. There was no passageway below deck on a destroyer.

7 Dec. '43 "Steaming NE 875 miles from Pearl Harbor at 8 AM. Get to Pearl Thurs. morning. Lex has priority entering Pearl, therefore, we'll get in ahead of the other two Task Groups. Hughes, the Exec's officer, is a -----, Refused to o.k. new aviation papers."

8 Dec. "Lex sent her TBF (torpedo bomber fighter) and SBD (dive bomber) to Pearl Harbor at 2 PM yesterday. We got in at 8 AM. Today makes # 42 days of our 45 days without food supplies." The planes were always taken off the carriers before they went into port. The planes could not be launched unless the carrier was moving—they took off into the wind.

9 Dec. "Other Task Group already in. We got in and tied up at 3 PM. SBD crashed in the sea at the entrance as we entered, neither man got out. Went on Guard Mail trip. We're leaving tomorrow for ten days in the States. Harbor full of all kinds of ships. Place is really crowded."

10 Dec. "We were over at base on shore all morning—got ice cream, etc to eat. Pulled out of Pearl Harbor at 4 PM. With 5 other cans. Have only 5 days leave there. Hate to see land fall away after 30 days of nothing but sea. Land looked good. Making 20 K steaming NE in a battle line. Get into Frisco Wed., the 15th."

The Commodore had the choice of 5 days in the States or 2 weeks in Pearl. He immediately answered that we would take the States.

11 Dec. "The sea smooth, weather cool. A blanket had to be taken out. There are really beautiful nights---full moon at sea."

13 Dec. "Sea a little rough. Getting colder."

14 Dec. "Dropped 11 depth charges to check any damage that might be unknown."

15 Dec. "Under Golden Gate Bridge at 7:37 AM. Cold as heck. Tied up to dock at Oakland at noon. Went ashore on liberty at 4 PM over to San Francisco. Had photo made, then to Stage Door Canteen. Met Gloria and danced and ate. She got off at 9 PM. Went to café and ate and talked. Went to late movie."

16 Dec. "Walked down to Navy Supply to get some clothes stayed on ship all afternoon."

17 Dec. "Over on liberty at 4 PM. Met Gloria the Frances Drake Hotel and had dinner and danced. Jay Pickens doing the singing. Went to another late movie."

18 Dec. "Over at 8 AM to Frisco and I got Guard Mail PO and other things for the ship. Back at 1:30 PM." Repairs and modifications were being done on the ship and we had duties, so didn't get every day off.

19 Dec. Sun. "Over on liberty at 11 AM. Made a few calls, then out to Gloria's for dinner. Went to a movie."

20 Dec. "Off ship at 3 PM. Got bus for Sacramento and got in at 10 PM." Stayed at the same hotel that I had before.

21 Dec. That day I met Cleo and saw her, then Jean and May. I tried to call home at 5:45 PM, but didn't get thru until 9 PM. Also called Shot at midnight.

22 Dec. '43 "I went back to Frisco at 1 PM., returned to ship and then went to a hotel in Frisco. I saw Gloria and met Dorothy at the Stage Door Canteen."

23 Dec. '43 I began my physical exam for Flight Training—I had gone to the Flight Board again. Passed and nothing wrong. I went to Sacramento and saw Cleo, had dinner with Mae and then went to Cleo's home. Also called Ginger.

24 Dec. I saw Cleo before I returned to Frisco. I stayed at the Pickwick Hotel in Frisco and shared a room with two fellows from Ohio as the hotel was so crowded. I went to the Stage Door Canteen and saw Marie and had a swell time. The town was sure crowded.

25 Dec. It rained most of the day. I had dinner with Gloria and Larry and Norma. Gloria and I cooked Christmas dinner. She was from NC and neither of us knew much about cooking. She had gotten a duck and we stuffed it and cooked it. At least it was better than shipboard food! Later we went to their friends house. I was served something that looked like hot chocolate in a demitasse cup---it was putrid!!! It turned out that it was a Tom and Jerry—hot alcohol.

26 Dec. I was on board ship all day.

27, 28 Dec. I had liberty those days and I saw Marie, met Dorothy and went to Berkley to see her, too. I also went to the Stage Door Canteen.

29 Dec. "Left dock at 1 PM and under Golden Gate Bridge at 3:10 PM. The city faded out in the fog. Steaming SE for San Diego. Number of boys seasick."

30, 31 Dec. Entered dock and stayed in San Diego for 2 days. Had liberty and I saw River Russell.

1 Jan. '44 "Out of Diego at 8 AM. 3 battleships, 4 cruisers, 18 transports and 20 cans. Transports loaded with boot Marines (Just out of boot camp). Practice landing on some island. At 8 PM, 10 transports, 1 landing craft, 3 small carriers and 8 cans including ourselves left the rest of the formation."

2 Jan. Sun. We moved in at 2 PM and began landing troops with the other part of force on an island. Some ship shelling the island over the heads of the Marines. Out at 4:30 PM."

3 Jan. "Back to the island at 5 AM and landed troops all day and then reloaded them until 3 AM."----that was not a misprint—it was 22 hours.

4 Jan. "At the California coast at 10 AM at Ocean Side to unload troops--- halfway between Diego and LA. Going back to Diego tomorrow. Finished and pulled out of Ocean Side at 11:30 PM."

5 Jan. "Outside entrance at daylight, but did not enter until 11 AM. Tied up at 1 PM and liberty at 4 PM. Around town awhile and then out to Russell's". River Russell was from Hayneville and they had moved to California during the war so her father could work out there.

6 Jan. "Out of port at 8 AM to make runs on sub. Back in Diego at 5:30 PM."

7 Jan. We were in port all day and I went to the beach and saw a couple girls.

8 Jan. "Out of port at 7 AM. Practicing firing on sleeves on plane, back in 6 PM. 17 tons of food aboard at 11 PM. I was up until 2 AM looking after PAL."

9 Jan. We were out at 7:30 AM firing on radio controlled plane. Shot it down. We came in port at 3:30 PM and I left on liberty at 4 PM. I went to Russell's and ate dinner and there was another fellow from Hayneville there, too—Mr. Ray. I met a girl from Michigan on a bus."

10 Jan. "Out at 6:30 AM to make runs on a sub and back in at 5 PM"

11 Jan. We were in port and I had liberty and went to see Russell's and ate there.

12 Jan. "In port all day taking life easy. Leaving early tomorrow morning. Liberty up at midnight, but I stayed aboard all day."

13 Jan. "Out of harbor at 7 AM. We were circling outside while convoy formed. Took til 2:30 PM. 53 ships all total. 3 battleships, 4 cruisers, 3 small converted carriers, 21 transports and 22 destroyers of all types and none of the destroyers ever been with us before. Convoy speed 12 K steaming SW."

14 Jan. "Cloudy and little light rain. We're to stop at one of the small Hawaiian Islands."

15 Jan. "Big swell, firing practice."

16 Jan. Sun. "Have laid my coat aside. Firing practice. Going to Maui Island."

17-20 Jan. "Rocking and rolling each day. All kinds of drills, etc."

21 Jan. "Between islands of Maui and Moloki at daylight. Around to small harbor for ships to anchor. It's not a protected harbor. We patrolled until 5:30 PM, went in to fuel. Anchored at 10:30 PM. New Skipper came aboard. The old one also remained aboard. Leave tomorrow for the Marshall Islands. We are to attack Kawajalein Atoll to bombard the island. Probably join battleships after this operation."

A protected harbor was one that could be closed at night.



22 Jan. '44 "Out on patrol at 1 PM, back in at 7 AM, out at noon. About 9 days to reach Marshalls. Tied by cruiser Indianapolis and 3 tankers and 3 destroyers. A total of 60 ships. Something around 350 ships to be in the attack and occupation. My aviation papers left the ship signed. North and south defense groups Task Force joined together about 11 PM."

23 Jan. Sun. "One week from today we bombard Wotje Island and land troops the next day on Kawajalein. Weather getting hot, feels like Spring."

I worked in Radar and that meant I was in CIC (Combat Information Center). That was the brains, ears and eyes of the ship. All the planning, plotting and navigation was done in CIC so consequently, I always knew what was going on and where we were going. We had 5 radio circuits for Aircraft and we could hear what they were doing. When we were going for any invasion, we had the plans for the D day—which was the day we would land. We would start with D minus 30 and that meant it was 30 days away. D plus 2 was two days was after landing. Everything was subject to change, depending what developed.

An example of the fighter plane circuit was one we heard on Guadalcanal. Henderson Field was on the island and the code name was Cactus. During an air attack one day we heard the following.

Pilot: "How about some help up here! I have 7 Zeroes cornered!"

No answer and complete silence for 5 minutes, then

Another pilot: "Hey, where have you got those 7 Zeroes cornered?"

First Pilot: "I don't know. They were way up yonder and I came down here."

Another day we heard the following.

Pilot: "See that rain squall down there? I'm going down and fly thru it and cool off."

Second Pilot: "Well, get off the air—don't tell everybody where you're going!"

At the end of '42 and beginning of '43 at Guadalcanal the most the Marines could get in the air was 8-15 planes. There were more planes, but that was all that were air worthy at any one time. That's all we had. The Japs would send anywhere from 25-150 planes over. We were outnumbered in everything.

24 Jan. "Plenty of drills and GQ, nothing unusual happening."

25 Jan. "Jap islands we are to hit are well fortified and probably be many more killed on Kawajalein than Tarawa. One plane crashed in water during drills, but pilot picked up o.k. Another crashed and burned on deck of carrier. Still making 13 K on SW course."

26 Jan. '44 "Turned back east making 9 K to fuel Task Force. We fueled at 12:30 PM. Chenango rammed the Suwanee at 4:05 PM, but practically stopped. Little damage to Suwanee. SBD landed in water, both men O.K. Buried the pilot at 6 PM at sea that crashed on Chenango yesterday."

Both of the ships were converted carriers which were small ships that were in the process of being built and then they were converted to carriers, called CVL's. They could only carry 12-15 planes. When the Suwanee was rammed, it was a bright sunny, clear day in wide open and smooth sea. Evidently, the Chenango zigged when they

should have zagged. We saw them and they were rammed broadside—there was no reason for it.

The TF moving at sea, changed course at certain times—the instructions were sent by radio or signal flags. Sometimes we knew ahead of time and they were in the plans. We watched the command ship and when it executed, everyone else was supposed to.

28 Jan. '44 "Steaming SE. Fueling completed at 11 AM, turned SW. 850 miles away at 9:30 AM. Tankers left to fuel other Task Force." Tankers did not stay with us. They fueled the ships and retreated. As a rule, they did not go into the combat area as they were sitting ducks.

29 Jan. "Getting plenty hot. All drills have ceased. Next GQ will be the real thing. Carriers from other TF (Task Force) hit the 3 islands at dawn and cans and cruisers shelled Wotje Airfield. Louisville, Mobile, Biloxi and Santa Fe and 6 cans---- Fletcher and 5 were 1 800 class destroyers which were smaller destroyers. Crossed date line at 7 AM. We all left TF at 1 PM and steaming SW to Wotje to be there at dawn tomorrow. Making 20 K. Japs have spotted us."

30 Jan. Sun. "GQ at 4:05 AM. Began shelling at 6:30 AM. Made two runs shelling. Large fire started on airfield. Signal tower blown down, buildings destroyed, crane hit, runway damaged and shore batteries hit. Biloxi covered twice by water from shells landing close on bow and beams. A number fell short of us, one over, very close and one torpedo passed alongside, sub sighted. No damage to any of our ships except on a can, Anderson—hit Captain and a few other officers and men killed and a number wounded when shell hit in CIC. (I'm moving my battle station out of CIC). One AK (supply ship) of Japs sighted only 10 miles away. Planes strafed it. We left 10:30 AM and joined our other ships at 6 PM. 3 Carriers left us at 9 PM. Beautiful moonlight night." The air strikes were finished.

31 Jan. "All ships except us and 4 other cans, 11 transports and 2 tugs went in at daylight. We go in at 1 PM. Joined by LaVallete at 10 AM. In sight of island at 11 AM. Battleships shelling island all day. Big columns of black smoke from main islands of Burlesque and Camouflage (code names). Number of explosions all day and new fires. All small islands taken by dark, very little resistance. Some prisoners taken." The shelling and bombardment paid off.

1 Feb. "We patrolled all night about 8 miles off island. We had no alert. Explosions all night as battleships and cruisers continued to bombard Burlesque and Camouflage islands. Heavy shelling from ships all morning and Marines landed on Burlesque at 12:30 PM and Camouflage at 1 PM. Three Carriers standby to furnish protection from the air, if necessary. Fighters overhead and dive bombers and TBF's continue to bomb island. Shelling ceased at 2:30 PM as troops had Burlesque Island under control. At 3 PM only a few scattered Japs left and tanks taking care of them. Camouflage cleared by 5 PM. Very few men wounded. We're taking life as easy as normal as life on any other trip. 1 AM ran on coral reef, but got off without much damage."

2 Feb. '44 "All supply ships inside Lagoon. We're patrolling outside. Japs still holding out on NW corner of Camouflage at 8 AM. At 10 AM we joined 3 battleships, 3

carriers, and 5 cruisers 25 miles north of islands. These are the same ships that have been with us all the way. An AK and the Anderson ran on coral reefs last night. Anderson in bad shape. The 3 BB (battleships) and 3 cruisers left at 1 PM and went inside lagoon. We resumed patrol at 7 PM. Still a few Japs holding out on NW corner of Camouflage."

3 Feb. '44 Solace (hospital ship) came in at 10 AM. We entered lagoon at 11 AM and fueled from Gemsbox, a liberty ship converted into a tanker. About 60 ships inside—LST (landing ship tank), DD (destroyer), AM, AK (supply and troop transport), KA, PA, BB, CA, CL. Six LST's loaded with men, trucks and other equipment and the Gemsbox came in yesterday at 10 AM. A PBM (4 engine flying boat) circling to land today at noon. Sub contacted by us and some other ship. We dropped one depth charge. Still large black columns of smoke from Camouflage that began with the fires two days before the invasion when we were shelling. DD Sullivan is here. All resistance on Camouflage wiped out."

The Sullivan was named for the 5 Sullivan brothers from Waterloo, Iowa who were killed on the USS Juneau which was sunk at Guadalcanal.

4 Feb. "Solace left at 4 PM. At 5:30 PM 6 transports and 4 DD pulled out for Funatuit in the Ellise Islands—a 4 day trip. Passed the Solace at 10:30 PM with all lights on and looked as if it was a Christmas tree."

In the combat area, from sundown to sunrise there were no lights on the ships. Even the red ash of a cigarette could be seen for 2 miles at sea. You could see 14 miles before the horizon curved, so any lights would make us a target. The hospital ships, however, were always lighted as they were supposed to have safe passage. The Japs did not always adhere to that, tho and some were hit. The hospital ships were painted white, with large red crosses on the stack.

5 Feb. "Steaming SE at 14 K. Sea is a little rough, rocking and rolling. Nights are beautiful. What I would give to be in the States! I'm getting Ping and Pip happy. Days are hotter."

When the Sonar sent out a signal, it went Ping every few seconds. If it hit a target, it came back with an echo. On the radar when there was a target, there was no sound, but there was a pip on the screen.

Aircraft had an AK (signal) that was sent out—called IFF (identification, friend or foe). With that we could tell what kind of a plane and of course, if it was an US plane. The pilot would have to turn the IFF on.

Some pilots failed to turn it on and we would consider it a bogey (an enemy). If we started to fire, some of them became a friendly plane immediately—they turned it on!

One night we called one on the radio and told him we were sorry we didn't see his lights and we started to fire. He said that was o.k. as he forgot to turn it on. All aircraft was considered a bogey, until they were identified as friendly.

One day the radar station at Russell Island picked up a bogey 60 miles out. We picked him up as a B17 and as friendly. 40 miles out, the pilot said he thought he was their bogey, but he was friendly. Russell never did pick him up as friendly---something was not working on their radar. The pilot referred to himself as a "friendly bogey".

Russell accepted that he was friendly, but told him not to fly over the island because he was still labeled bogey and their gunners were jittery and they might open up.

6 Feb. '44 Sun. "Not making but 12 ½ K due to rough weather."

7 Feb. "Crossed equator at 2:10 AM—plenty hot, sea a little rough. One transport had engine trouble at 11 PM and began to drop back."

8 Feb. "Transport took one hour to repair her damage. Caught back up by daylight. Giving the "Polliwogs" the works today. Some fun."

9 Feb. "Outside entrance at daylight, alongside tanker at 10 AM. Went to Pretory (supply ship) at 1 PM to check supplies. Got candy, coke and strawberries and back to ship at 6 PM."

We went to the supply ship in a landing craft while we were refueling. They had requisitions for different things and while they were processing, I "stole" or "borrowed" the peanut butter, strawberries and coke and we took it to the radar shack. I would just put it in the line to be loaded.

The coke we got was in gallon jugs for the soda fountain, but we had no CO to make it fizz. We decided to make our own CO. We took the small CO cylinders out of our life belts and there was a little soft place in the end that pushed out to inflate the life belt. We punched it out in one of them and put it in a pitcher of coke and water. The CO cylinder came out of the pitcher like a rocket and went in the air 3 or 4 feet. The next one we held our hand over the top of the pitcher to hold it in, but it didn't help the taste, so we just drank the regular water and coke syrup. It did make the distilled water taste better.

We got all our water from the sea. The ships had evaporators on them which made the distilled water. Our showers were distilled water, so we used only the amount of water that we had to.

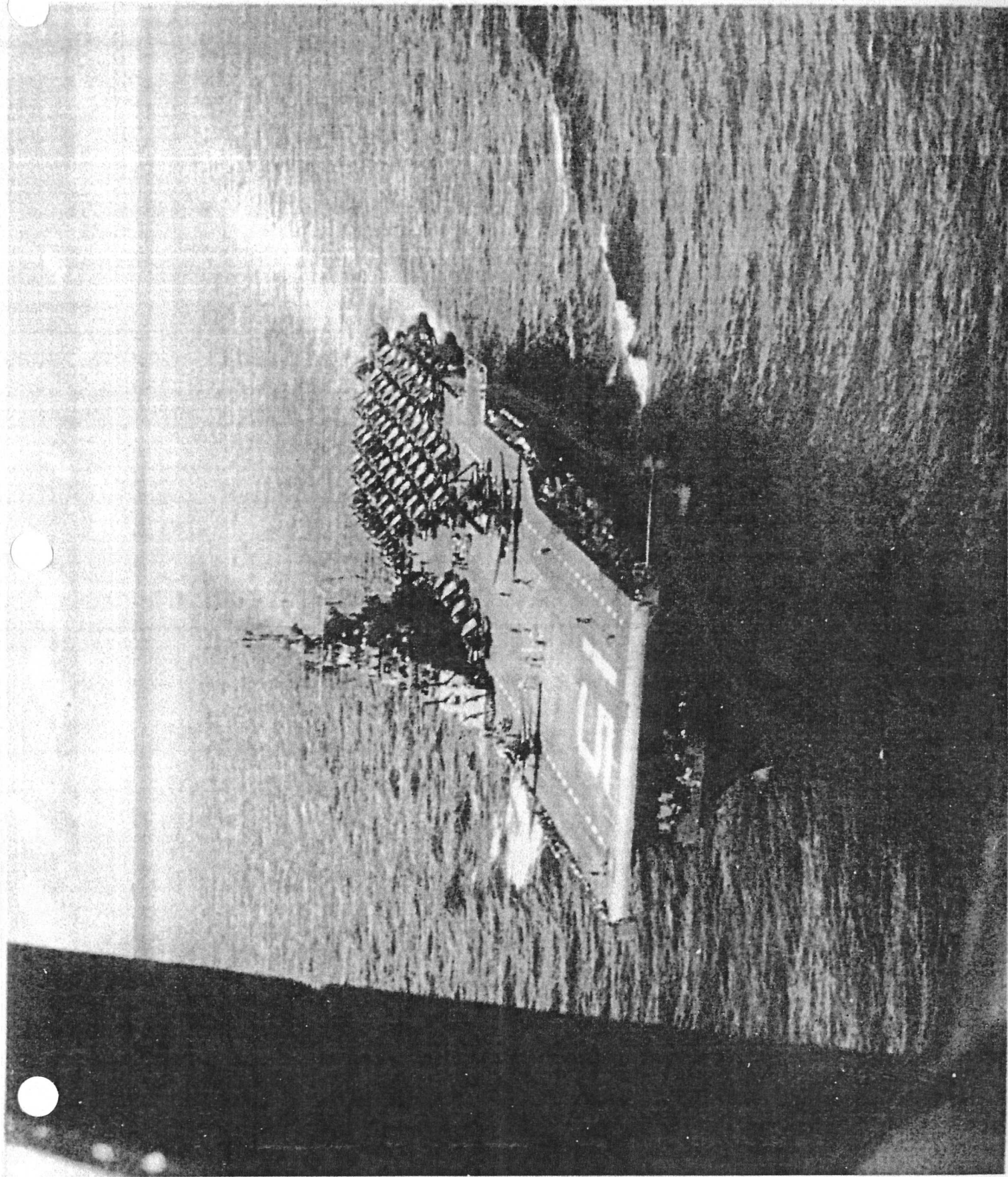
Still 9 Feb. "5 inch ammunition and 40 mm ammunition came aboard after movie, also 20 tons of food. (The other food we had gotten was for the ship's store). We also have the listening watch. 35-40 ships in harbor. No warships other than 3 DD and Cascade (tender)."

In the listening watch, we would sit at the entrance of the harbor with the Sonar so we could hear if a sub came in. We did this at harbors that were not protected. You could hear all kinds of sounds on the Sonar—including fish.

10 Feb. '44 "Anchored near the entrance and on 30 minutes notice. A few more supply ships and tanker came in. French ship is also here and a couple tankers flying the flag of Panama. The "Old Man" (skipper) leaving early tomorrow and made a little speech before he left and turned the ship over to Foster, the new Skipper. Said he hated to leave, we were glad to see him leave. Also said we had been recommended for the Presidential Citation, but don't imagine we will ever get anything. Got one letter today, first in many weeks."

One day we would get mail six weeks old and the next time we would get mail three or four months old. It was disappointing when I didn't get much. We never did get the Presidential Citation even tho we were recommended for it two or three times.

11 Feb. "Out at 10 AM, raining all morning. 3 tankers, DD Porterfield and us, 4 SS's (steamship) going to Marjure Islands at 13 K. Will arrive Tues. morning."



ED BY THE 850-FOOT FLIGHT DECK OF THE "ESSEX"-CLASS CARRIER "RANDOLPH" AT HER STERN ROWS OF COMBAT PLANES WAIT WITH FOLDED WINGS

12 Feb. '44 "Plenty hot. Slowed to 12 K. Harris (2100 DD) came by at 9 PM. Passed 3 1/2 miles off shore of the first Gilbert Islands at 9:30 PM".

13 Feb. Sun. "Crossed equator at 11:30 AM. SS MP has 100 tons of TNT aboard."

14 Feb. "Big swells in sea. Routine GQ morning and night."

15 Feb. "In Marjure Lagoon at noon alongside tanker to fuel. About 30 ships in. LSTs, AK and tankers. Prairie (destroyer tender) also in. Passed converted carrier and 2 cans as we came in. BB Wash. and Ind. Collided about 3 weeks ago killing 17 men and they're buried here. Washington is at Makin being repaired enough to make the trip to the States. 55 Jap ships reported between Truk and New Britain. Went aboard Prairie to get radar tubes. Saw 4 Japs on shore—old man and woman and 2 younger boys. Jap army left this island 11 months ago. We are waiting on 2 old BB (N.M. and Penn.) probably. Movies on fantail."

To show the movies, the #5 gun mount on the fantail would be turned sideways and the projector put in it. There were a lot of rain squalls and this way the projector was protected. The screen would be set up on the fantail of the ship along the rail at the back. Often we would sit out in the rain and watch them. At least, the rain cooled us off. The ships would swap movies. They were shown most every night when we were anchored and not in combat zone.

When we were tied up alongside the tender, there were sometimes one to three destroyers on each side. Sometimes we were in the middle of a couple destroyers. In that case, one ship would show a movie on the fantail and the other on the bow. We could watch one and then the other.

16 Feb. "Sitting in harbor with SC radar guard on. Found my 51 Parker pen last night. I lost it the night the Lex got hit. Went aboard Prairie. 6 more AK came in."

17 Feb. '44 "Went to Prairie and got some small brushes and a pair of good sun glasses. NM, Miss, Idaho (BB) and DD's Black, Schoreder, Chauncey, Bullard came in. Jap base at Truk being hit hard by Navy forces. We had a five minute condition red at 8:30 PM."

Condition Red means that the enemy is in the area.

18 Feb. "Condition red at 1 PM. Went to Prairie for Guard Mail. DD O'Bannon came in with a few AK's. Don't think the new Skipper is going to be so hot."

19 Feb. "Upped anchor at 8 AM and went alongside tanker to fuel. Some of the ships came in from the Truk raid. 8 carriers were in the operation. BB bombarded the island. Chester, Pensacola and DD Kidd, Salt Lake came in at 10 AM. One of our carriers hit in Truk raid, 16 Jap ships hit heavy, 2 carriers and 1 cruiser and DD. We were to leave at noon, but cancelled. About 7 liberty ships came in. 60 ships. Out at 6 PM to patrol off entrance. Met converted carrier 16 Nassau, DD Chauncey coming in. We picked up BB at dawn to go bombard a couple islands. Feels good to get back in a fighting task force again."

Liberty ships were made by Kaiser during the war. They were thrown together and not well made, but they did do the job.

20 Feb. Sun. "1 Carrier and 2 DD's came out at dawn. 2 heavy cruisers, converted carrier and 2 DD's came in at dawn. 3 DD's and 3 BB's and us steamed out.

Sea rough at entrance and rocked and rolled all night. We put 3 pilots off on a patrol ship at dawn-- - we got them off the Prairie yesterday. Number of fellows sea sick, but not me as yet. GQ at 2:15 PM. BB began shelling at 3 PM. We did not fire. We ran up and down at 3,000 yards off shore—could see the planes on runway and shore batteries, but none fired back. Ceased firing at 6 PM. No fires started. We are to hit this again Wed. Carrier Nassau standing off so her planes can be used for spotting. Jap sub reported 50 miles north. We hit Wotje tomorrow. Sunken ship visible off SE end of island, $\frac{3}{4}$ out of water."

21 Feb. '44 "GQ at 8:15 AM. Began shelling at 10,000 yards of Wotje. No opposition. One large fuel fire started. Nassau furnishing planes again. DD's Walker and Dale up looking for sub sighted yesterday. Ceased shelling at 12:15 PM. We are to come back tomorrow. These islands are hard hit. Engines turning over 17 K and we are going 14 K." Rough seas slowed us down.

22 Feb. "Ordered back to Marjure. Left 3 BB's and 2 DD's at entrance at 11 AM and the Porterfield and us turned north to join TF 51 (the one that raided Truk) tomorrow at Kwajalein Atoll. Sea a little smoother. About 150 ships in Marjure including Enterprise. Porterfield left us at 8 PM to return to Marjure to repair engine trouble."

23 Feb. "In Kawajalein and alongside tanker at 9:30, then out to anchor. BB New Jersey is in, Clotworthy is on her.(Adm. Halsey on her) 2 converted carriers in and all about 30 other ships. Small Jap merchant ship sunk and on beach at small island at entrance. These islands were heavily hit before. Land is stripped of trees. Ordered out at 2 PM to go south about 60 miles and investigate native outrigger sailing boats heavily loaded with unidentified men. Planes spotted boats. Made full speed of 35 K and 2 planes also searching. Found number of sailing boats, but all natives, no Japs. We may go to Pearl Harbor soon. Continued searching all night. Got mail for the first time in many weeks."

24 Feb. '44 "Back in Kawajalein and fueled, then anchored by 9:30 AM. 2 carriers gone. Got a message from Clotworthy and sent him one. Out at 4 PM to patrol outside entrance. N.J., DD Burns and 2 DE came out at 6 PM. NJ and Burns went to Marjure. We relieved the Harrison."

25 Feb. " Left at 8 AM for Roi Island about 60 miles north. In harbor at 12:30 PM and fueled. Hospital ship, Relief, DD Radford, 3 DE's and about 22 other ships, LST's, AK's and tankers in harbor. Out at 5 PM with 2 DE's and 2 AK's for Enewetok Island, the island we were supposed to help take, but they didn't wait on us. DE's Donalson and Sanders and 2 AK's with us."

26 Feb. "Steamed NW 11 K. Met TF made up of 10 DD's, transports and cruisers that took Enewetok at 5 AM. We almost hit each other even though we knew they were there at 23 miles away. More Navy strategy! Our trip to Honolulu cancelled. We are going south, back in the war once again. The change is welcomed. Radford and Nicholas to return to the States soon for 30 days of repair."

27 Feb. Sun. "In by Perry Island at 9 AM and anchored by Enewetok. 15 supply ships in, 2 cruisers, 8 cans and Indianapolis came in at noon. Went to Louisville

at 2 PM for Guard Mail. Indianapolis was hit at Kawajalein bombardment, but not much damage."

28 Feb. '44 "Out at 11 AM on patrol outside entrance."

29 Feb. "Back in harbor at 1 PM fueled from tanker. Indianapolis also alongside. Anchored later with listening watch. This new moon really makes these nights beautiful. Skipper isn't so hot."

1 Mar. "At anchor—listening watch. Went to Louisville for Guard Mail."

2 Mar. "Out at 11 AM on patrol outside entrance. Radar and sound men are now standing wheel watches—Skippers brain storm. Hats and shirts to be worn at all times, black shoes only. One fellow that went to Quartermaster's School was put in signal gang and now he's in deck gang and also another one that trained for Quartermaster. Boy, what an outfit! We have stood regular underway watch since leaving Diego—getting tiresome."

Wheel watches were where we steered the ship. In that half hour we had off the radar, we had to do the wheel watch. That didn't last too long. It didn't make sense that men were trained for something and then put in the deck gang. When we were underway, we always stood our watches, but usually when we were anchored and out of the war zone, the radar was not manned. This Skipper had us at watch all the time.

3 Mar. "Back in harbor, fueled from Gemsbox and anchored. At this time no ship flies a Jack or takes the flag down at night. Skipper is drill happy, routine GQ each night just before the movie."

As a rule, the Union Jack, which was blue background with white stars, was flown on the bow when at anchor. The Stars and Stripes were flown on the fantail at anchor. Otherwise, when underway, the Stars and Stripes were flown on a mast behind # 2 stack, so it could be clearly seen.

4 Mar. '44 "New Skipper is going to have everyone moved. We left at 4 PM with 4 AK's, and 1 DE, 1 DD, AK's going to Pearl. We go part way then swing back to Marjure Atoll. We won't see Honolulu---may go south. Beautiful breakers outside Enewetok Atoll. What nights!!"

Mar. 5 Sun. Steaming east at 10 K. We go to dateline and turn south to Marjure. Skipper is some fellow for drills--- all day. We are going south in two or three weeks, don't know yet if we are to stay for duty or are going on a raid. It will be better than this—no rest any time and doing nothing. Halsey gave us a few days off once in awhile. One of the fellows hit an Indian named, Hill, in the head with a wooden mallet in one of the gun turrets. He was knocked out, but came to and made it to his bunk. This happened last night at 10 PM. Hill is one of the most worthless guys I have ever seen and has been asking for something like this for sometime. They couldn't wake him today, still out and moved him to vacant captain's room below."

Mar. 6 "Hill still unconscious at 9:30 AM, had a 106 fever. At 10:00 AM we started for Kawajalein to put him on hospital ship. Making 30 K. At 11:45 AM, Hill died and we turned to rejoin our ship. Kawajalein was in sight and only 2 miles off. We asked SOP (Senior Officer Present) to take the body, but they refused. Placed his body

in ice box (refrigerator aboard ship) to carry him back to port to make examination (autopsy). Passed only 15 miles from Majure Atoll at 11 PM."

Hill was a BIG oversized bully that was always picking on someone. Freeman, who hit him, was about 100 lbs smaller and Hill was always picking on Freeman.

Mar. 7 '44 "6 hours ahead of schedule and we're having to wait on DE—going in circles all afternoon. 1 AK and 2 DE's passed us at 5 PM, our DE (Riddle) finally came along at 6:30 PM and we turned east again. Have heard no one express any sorrow over the death of Hill—glad to be rid of him is the general feeling."

Mar. 8 "Steering went out on bridge at 4 AM.—a close call, but didn't hit any ship. Resumed position after it was repaired at 11 AM. Was raining when I got up and has been off and on all day. Dumped a gallon of peanut butter from the can to a jar last night to eat on watch—it'll last awhile. Sea has been smooth as glass, beautiful moon."

Mar. 9 "Crossed date line at noon. Trathen, (DD) and ourselves turned SW at 2 PM and proceeding to Marjure at 14 K—could make 22 K, but this Skipper we have, couldn't see it. Routine drill all day (He should be teaching school) Enewetok bombed by Japs last night and damage done, but not disclosed."

Mar. 10 '44 "Skipper drilled crew at GQ this morning and again in afternoon and GQ tracking drill at night."

Mar. 11 "In at 7:30 AM and anchored. Went to Prairie for Guard Mail. About 50 ships in. 6 BB's, 1 carrier (Lexington), 11 DD's. Airport is in operation for all planes, even bombers. 3 cruisers also in here and Hospital ship, Relief. Took Hill's body to the Relief. Rained all afternoon and tonight."

I had the names of many of the ships in my diaries, but I will not put down the majority of them. They are in my books, if anyone cared to look.

Mar. 12 Sun. "Shifted berths at 9 AM. Skipper cancelled church party. He is definitely a @#%&@. The hearing of Hills' death by Freeman began today. 50 tons of food came aboard."

A church party meant to go to church at a larger ship or on land as cans didn't have a Chaplain.

Mar. 13 "At anchor but no rest—we are standing underway watches. Sam Knight is to leave for school at Diego tomorrow."

Mar. 14 "Over to Prairie for Guard Mail. Knight went aboard supply ship, Castor, which is leaving this afternoon for the States. We are to leave in a few days with 6500 lb. of plane towing equipment for the Enterprise. A converted carrier came in and went out today."

Mar. 15 "The Ajek is a waste of money as for the repairing it is doing. No one busy doing anything while the Prairie is always busy. Went aboard Prairie for radar parts and to Ajek. 5 DD's pulled out for South Pacific. We leave for there the 18th."

Mar. 16 "Clotworthy came over and stayed all day—great to see him. Buried Hill on island."

Mar. 17 "Went to Prairie for Attack Teachers. Lex, NJ, Iowa and DD's out, probably for Honolulu."

Mar. 18 '44 "Out at 7 AM, steaming SW to Button at 21 K. Should be there in 3 days. The mine layer, Terror, and sub tender, Sperry, came in. 2 GQ's for drill today."

Mar. 20 "No Sunday. Today is Monday. Even tho we crossed the date line, we used +12 time. GQ at 6 AM. Passed 50 miles west of island the Japs once held. Yesterday we fired large number of AA and dropped 7 depth charges. GQ last night and laid smoke screen. Crossed the Equator at 8 AM. This guy, Foster, must think everyone is as green as he at this job."

Mar. 21 "At 2 AM changed course to Tulaghi instead of Button. A couple more GQ's. Once an unidentified plane passed over at 9 PM."

Mar. 22 "In channels at Guadalcanal at dawn. The old place looked the same as always. Steamed across "iron bottom bay" to Tulaghi and entered Purvus Bay alongside tanker at noon. Tanker was the one towed in here last Oct. when we were here. She was put out of commission by torpedo near Australia a year ago. About 50 ships in. 3 cruisers, number of DD's, 2 tenders. Woodworth pulled out at noon for good ole USA. Went ashore at Lyons Point for Guard Mail. Rained the movie out."

Iron Bottom Bay was the water around Guadalcanal and Savo Island. The reason it was called that was because there were so many sunken ships in that area—both of the US and Japanese.

23 Mar. '44 "Rained all day—got a wet trip back from the Whitney to Radar Movie and instructions. Hollywood TF of 3 cruisers and a few more DD's came in. One DD came in with no torpedoes. One of the French ships, El Capitan that was in Noumea at the beginning of the war was raised and towed here and is now alongside the Whitney. She is to be used to store supplies, etc. Renamed the Majaba. Lot of fighting ships in—a push soon."

24 Mar. "I went to Cleveland, Nicholas, LaVallete, Hopewell, Honolulu and beach at Lyons Point for Guard Mail. We're still alongside the O'Bannon. Mr. Townson (used to be aboard the Fletcher) met me on the Nicholas and had to show me his new ship radar and CIC. Rained as usual and movies below. The equipment for Enterprise that we had was taken off today. We are finally standing port watches and the rest feels great!"

25 Mar. "Over on beach. Had one drink of beer—enough! Rest was coke. Have radio station on Guadalcanal. 2 carriers are in and also 3 DD's. Bobby Chesnutt's ship, Fayette, is outside of net."

Altho I didn't know the Lord, I didn't drink or smoke. I went to some of the night clubs with my shipmates when we were in port, but I didn't drink and I got them to the ship. Today, it would be called the "designated driver."

26 Mar. Sun. "Went to church aboard Columbia."

Church was something I was supposed to go to. It wasn't that I had a heart's desire for the Lord. In fact, as far as I know, I never met a Chaplain in the service that was a real Christian. They would tell dirty jokes and act as most of the Navy men did.

27 Mar. "Out tomorrow for a couple days of practice firing. New Flag Commander coming aboard when we return to port."

28 Mar. "Out at 7 AM with 3 cruisers and 4 other DD's. Firing at sleeves from planes SW Guadalcanal. Torpedo runs at night."

The sleeves were on a long cable from the plane.

29 Mar. '44 "Southwest of Guadalcanal, cruisers and all cans but us and one other, firing on small island Rua for practice. Back to Purvis Bay alongside Sigrancy. Met 2 APA's (transport) leaving going south. Conway came in today. We are going to north Australia and New Guinea soon. New Commodore Jarrel for Flag came aboard.

30 Mar. "Went ashore and had a couple cokes. Had show put on by Army and Navy personnel and two Red Cross girls about 26. They looked like hags, even if it has been many months since I've seen a white girl. The Hawaiian orchestra was swell. Hot as heck here. Skipper finally sent after mail. He is the most stupid and dumbest devil I have seen in many a day."

31 Mar. "Son's ship, President Adams, came in. We have ready duty and can't go over today. It lies 500-600 yards away. Captain going to have all red lights after sunset. We are the only ship blacked out at night. He has been out here too long." We were back out of war zone and all other ships had lights, but we had to have the red ones because you couldn't see them as far.

1 Apr. '44 "Off ready duty at 8 AM and to see Son on Pres. Adams at 9:30 AM. Great to see him and the rest of his gang. Left at 4 PM. How I hated to leave him. Jenkins came in, got 30 bags of mail. Flag personnel came aboard. Radford also came in."

2 Apr. Sun. "Out at 6:30 AM, made 4 runs over designated range at Tulaghi, then out pass Savo and Florida Island. All kinds of GQ drills, dropped depth charges, back in at 4 PM, fueled and alongside Radford. They got a lot of mail aboard. We got 2 bags of newspapers and such and no letters."

3 Apr. "Guard mail trip to ship and Lyons Point morning and afternoon. Hopewell and LaVallette left a few days for New Guinea. Nicholas out to chase sub reported by plane."

4 Apr. "Out on recreation, then to Pres. Adams. Only had a hour with Son, but great. Columbia left for States. Cleveland and DD's leaving tomorrow for Sydney. We leave for New Guinea, Milne Bay."

5 Apr. "Out at 9 AM steaming SW at 15 K with 5 other DD's. 4 drills in GQ from noon to 8 PM. Sea smooth as glass and a beautiful moon. One unidentified plane closed to 15 miles and circled, then opened.(left)"

We called the Skipper GQ John because he called for GQ continuously and when it wasn't necessary. We were disgusted and it got where it took us 10 minutes to get to GQ. One day we were slowly going to our stations, when the main battery opened up. Needless to say, we knew that was reality and we got to our stations in a HURRY. Before GQ John, we would get to our stations in 55 seconds in the middle of the night when 2/3 of the crew was asleep.

6 Apr. "4 routine GQ's during day. 5 DE's about 7 miles south of us at all times."

7 Apr. "In sight of land at dawn. Met 3 cruisers and 4 cans going out. About 75 ships in. 20 C47 transport planes came over to land at 8:30—then back out at 11:30

Clocks went back one hour at 8 AM. 2 Australian cruisers went out, a US sub and 2 US cans with it. Lots of Australian crafts and 2 hospital ships here. US hospital ship, Solace, also in. Lots of DD and a Free French ship. Went ashore after Guard Mail. Nice place, swell air field. One beat-up Jap ship rusting on the beach. Out tomorrow for Buna. Milne Bay a swell looking place. Beautiful waterfalls on side of mountain."

8 Apr. '44 "Out at 7 AM with our 5 DD's thru China Straight to Buna. Many ships passed on the way down, some Dutch. Pulled into Buna at 5 PM. 11 DD are in and 8 more in at 6 PM and 2 tenders are in."

9 Apr. Sun. Easter "Church on APA 3, Zeilin. Fueled at 6 PM. There was an orchestra on a tanker and we tied beside her and could hear the music. Beautiful moon and swell music. As we left, they played and sang Anchors Away—gave you a funny feeling. Many ships are headed south, don't stay here. 4 Australians are aboard for temporary duty, but assigned to Higgins boat (landing craft). No mail to be expected for at least a month, probably 2 or 3 weeks. No planes are used to bring it in."

10 Apr. '44 "Went to Blue Ridge after Guard Mail in morning and to Buna ashore in afternoon. Many LST and APA in now. Airfield is always busy. We go alongside tender in a couple days for more fighter directing school. We'll be the largest ship in the formation when it comes, mostly LST's. Not much rain, just a little at night once in awhile."

12 Apr. "Misty rain all morning. Cool all day. Still no mail."

13 Apr. "Underway at 6 AM alongside O'Bannon. Alongside tender, Dobbin, at 8 AM. We were alongside Dobbin a year ago in Sydney. Most of food such as butter, fruits, jams, meats, sugar, etc. come from Australia. Wilkes tied up along our port side."

14 Apr. "Large transport loaded with soldiers came by and anchored. Went to Attack Teachers (Sonar training). Rain, wind and first large amount of lightning and thunder I've seen in a long time 10-11 PM." In the South Pacific there was very little thunder and lightning.

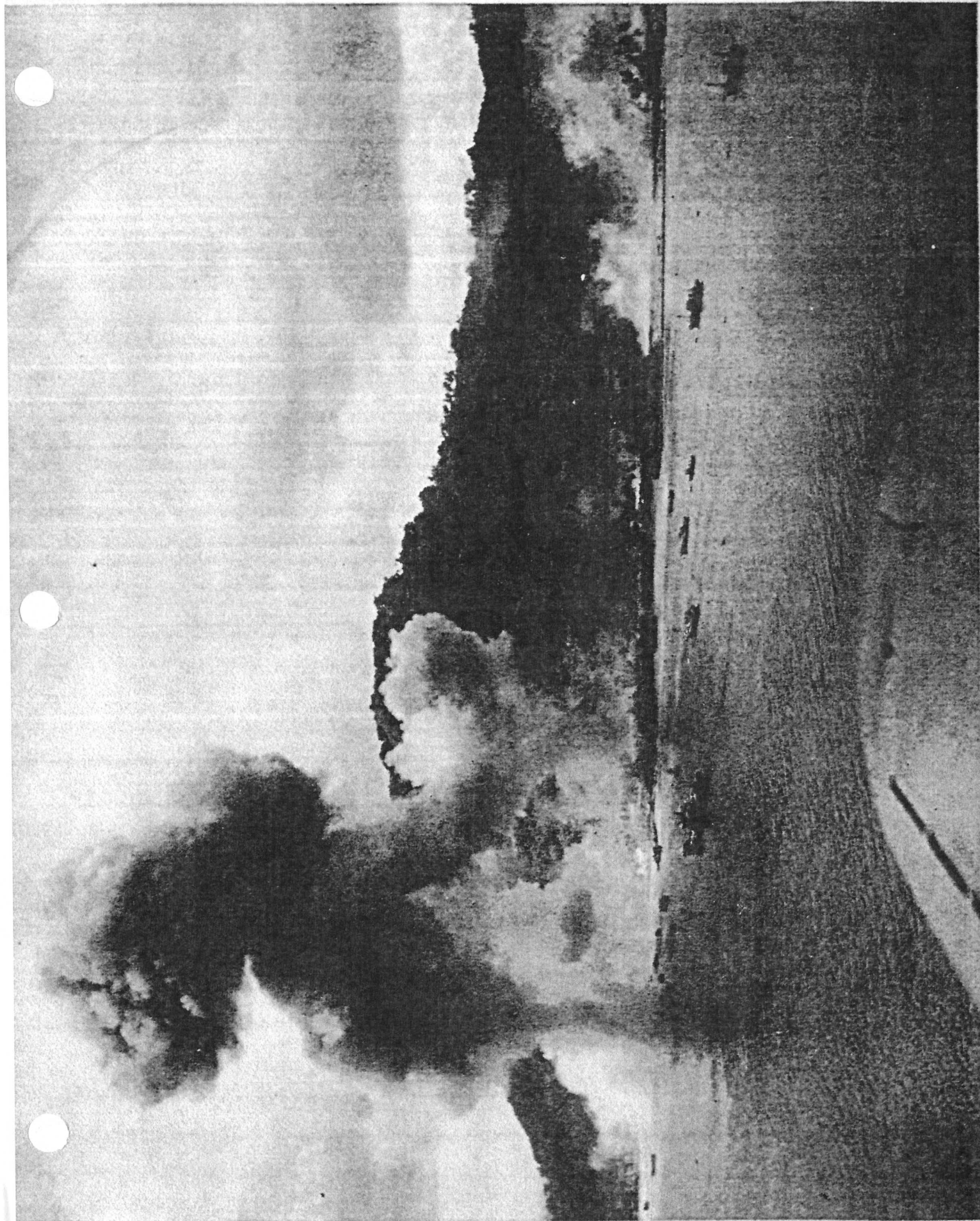
15 Apr. "Started to leave at 9 AM, but cancelled at last minute. Underway at noon and anchored. 2 Australian cruisers, 2 DD's. Pres. Adams is supposed to be here, but I haven't seen her."

16 Apr. Sun. "Two fighter director fellows (from the Army Air Corps) came aboard for this trip, beginning the 19th. Shouldn't be much trouble, maybe a few Jap planes."

17 Apr. "Fueled from tanker and then back to anchor. All DD's topping off with fuel. Going in close to beach in shelling. 2 DD's pulled out during the night. Reed is going to carry the Big Shots and newsmen."

18 Apr. "Two Australian cruisers and 2 of their DD's went out with 7 of our DD's. We are going to make a landing at Antigua behind the strong Jap force. Underway at 5 PM with another DD and 2 frigates to be at Cape Cretin in the morning."

19 Apr. "Commodore went aboard AKA for last minute instructions with LST commander. C47 coming in and landing and taking off in groups of one to



NAVY YARD AT TRUK WAS FIRED (LEFT) DURING THE AMERICAN FOLLOW-UP RAID IN APRIL 1944 WHICH CLEARED THE BASE OF SHIPS AND PLANES

five. 40 in two hours. 2 P47 (fighters), 3 P 34 (fighters) and 2 P40 (fighters) 15 B25 (bombers) came in to land at 8 AM. B 17 (4 engine bomber) came over. Nashville and 2 DD's came in and out in 15 minutes at high speed. Lots of LCT's in and out. We hit Antigua the 22nd and 23rd. Out at noon with 17 LST's and 5 AKA's. Convoy speed of 9 K. We are making 11 K. Dutch hospital ship at Cretin."

20 Apr. '44 "Cloudy, misty rain, wake smooth. Passed thru Admiralty Island. Beginning at 6 PM everything quiet fighting overhead. Search lights from field could see New Britain as we passed 45 miles west of it."

21 Apr. '44 "Hot as heck. Steaming NW. P47s overhead."

22 Apr. "Rain all morning, mist and cloudy all day. A Jap Betty closed to 10 miles at 1 PM. Formation split at 4 PM. We had 3 cans, 4 AKA's and 6 LST's joined by 4 ABD's, turned SW. Met 2 carriers TF and 1 cruiser. Lexington along."

23 Apr. Sun. "Up at 4:30 AM. Land dark. One light on shore about 4:30 AM. Clear sky. All ships between island and mainland at 6 AM. Commenced firing at 6:15 AM, shortly after dawn. Our planes bombed and strafed the Jap position and then the troops landed. We are 3,000 yards from the beach. Landing at Hollandia above here yesterday had very little trouble. One Betty shot down here today. We fired 365 rounds of 5" at beaches. Japs on a 15 by 20 yard island fired on SC—the ship in turn, sprayed the island with 20mm at 6-6:30 PM. Planes bombed and strafed another outpost on a mountain. Mortars opened up at 7 PM. Antigua was taken early. Out at 7:30 PM after 15 straight hours. Steaming NE with 3 AKA's, 8 LST's, 3 SC's and 3 YMS's, 3 DD's and us."

There was not much resistance and there weren't many Jap planes for which we were thankful.

24 Apr. "Turned SE at noon, plenty hot. Water has been smooth as glass whole trip. My eyes are a little swollen." That was because I looked at the Radar screen for 15 hours straight.

25 Apr. "Found small Army boat out of fuel and had been 2 days adrift. Glendale towed him in. Left LST's, APD's and MS's at Cretin at 11 PM and proceeded to Buna with 3 AKA's and 3 other DD's. 8 of us made and ate 3 gal. ice cream at midnight."

26 Apr. "At Buna at 10 AM. Fueled from tanker, also an Australian tanker alongside. Went to Blue Ridge after Guard Mail. We finally received a little mail ourselves. Went alongside the Pyro, ammunition ship, at 6 PM and loaded 800 rounds. Jenkins also alongside. At least 75 ships in, many liberty ships, 3 large Australian transports---brought US Army up to at Hollandia. I met a fellow named Boweling at Mundora. He was from Brisbane. Hospital ship, Solace, some other hospital ships under fire, are in." The hospital ships were supposed to be immune to shelling.

27 Apr. "Solace shoved off. We leave tomorrow. From a list sent from Com Cen Pac (Command Central Pacific), I am number 260 on a waiting list of 550 for Cadet training. If I don't receive orders by the 5th of Aug, they won't come thru. The list is changed then."

28 Apr. '44 "Out at 7 AM with 3 DD's to Cape Action. Orders to pick up 3 LSD's to take to Hollandia where the Japs bombed a couple nights ago and destroyed all their provisions. Steaming NW 15 K."

29 Apr. "Steaming NW. Met 6 DE's and frigates, 4 LST's and 10 SC's, YMS's, etc. at 11 PM. They are going NW also."

30 Apr. "Sun. Hollandia at 6 AM, out at 7 AM. Met a force of 7 DD's, 12 LST's, 5 SC's and YMS's, 10 LCI's and 9 transports at 8 AM. Passed 3 converted carriers, 2 Australian cruisers and 11 DD's at 11 PM. All these headed for Hollandia, but will go up the coast, I think. Jap carriers reported 500 miles north end of New Guinea. 10 Jap Haps (planes) reported at 1 AM north of Hollandia."

1 May '44 "GQ each morning and night since we left---average of 5 hours sleep each day. Met 2 AK's and 2 DD's going north at 2 PM., one convoy of AK's coming in. LSD's couldn't enter Cretin---too late." The harbor had been secured.

2 May "Left LSD and Cretin at 6 AM and steamed to Buna at 25 K. Arrived and fueled at 1 PM, then anchored. 2 large Australian transports in, only 3 repair ships."

3 May "Australian transport left. I went to Blue Ridge for Guard Mail. Fighter Directors left the ship, we are going to Purvis Bay by 14th."

4 May "At anchor and transport and 2 DD's came in."

5 May "More supply ships came and 10 Amphibious jeeps brought out food---some from supply ship, Ladd,--28 tons in all."

6 May "Went to Blue Ridge for Guard Mail. Routine GQ. Warning given to expect a storm, but only a slight wind shortly after sunset."

7 May Sun. At least 50 LST's and LCI's (Landing craft Infantry) are in. Radford and Taylor in at 5 PM. We leave tomorrow. Heavy seas and wind 6 PM - 10 PM. Big blow at sea."

8 May LaVallette came in. We went out at 6 PM with 10 LST's and 4 other DD's at 8 K down coast of New Guinea going to Russell Island, I think."

9 May "O'Bannon joined us at noon, she was at Milne Bay. Turned east at 5 PM and will arrive Russell Island Friday morning."

10 May "Sea has big swells, nice and cool with stiff winds and a little rain."

11 May "Steaming east at 8 K."

12 May "Got at Russell's at 7 AM. LST's went in harbor and we left at 11 AM ordered directly to Noumea, steaming south at 22 K and will arrive Sun morning. 1000 miles. 6 DD's only in two lines."

13 May "Steaming 22 K, 170 degrees. Stiff breeze and cooler. Feels good to be moving with a little speed again."

14 May Sun. "Cooler. A blanket may be needed tomorrow. Weather feels wonderful. Around lighthouse a 9 AM. Fueled from dock and then tied up alongside Nicholas in Noumea Harbor. About 8 liberty ships. One very large transport loaded with Sailors and Marines. Harbor looks very deserted compared with the old times."

15 May "Wakefield pulled out and a large Dutch transport, loaded, came in. Jenkins and Taylor dropped anchor. They began giving us a new 3 tone camouflage job. Have at least 5 days here. Made 2 trips to Noumea for Guard Mail. We are the

first warship that has been here in four months." We were painted blue before and this was our camouflage job.

16 May '44 "Making changes in our Radar. Weather is nice and cool."

17 May '44 "Went ashore at 1 PM. Ate plenty of ice cream, had a lot of fun--- five of us kidding French girls. Back to ship at 9:30. Admiral and 4 women aboard for dinner and movie."

18 May "Quite a lot of drunks came aboard. A few transports and liberty ships in." These were the crew getting back from liberty.

19 May "Turned a little cooler, but swell."

20 May "Over to beach at 1 PM. Frenchman (or Frenchie, my nickname for Blanchette) came back at 4 PM and passed out. Horseman and I saw the whole town, met one half French, one half ? and maybe half something else. What a place. Brought "Pop" aboard at 7 PM."

We called him Pop because he was so much older than we were---4 or 5 years older! He had so much to drink that he had no idea where he was.

21 May Sun "Last day in. Half of us leaving for Purvis Bay and further. Nice warm day---hate to leave."

22 May "Underway at 6 AM with all of 42. 3 other DD's and us went around east side of New Caledonia at 15 K for Treasure Island by the 25th. We left 2 fellows aboard a provision ship that came in late yesterday from Frisco. Unloaded mail all night. Up the east coast of Caledonia and between two upper Loyalty Islands. Jenkins left formation at 5 PM to pick up 2 men from plane that crashed 325 miles NE about 200 miles east of Efate." The 2 men that were left for some reason didn't get back to the Fletcher on time. When it was time to go, we left---whether everyone was aboard or not. For instance, if I had been on Guard Mail and the ship got immediate orders, I would have been left.

23 May "About 7 miles off coast of Efate at 8 AM. 2 planes towing sleeves came out, we shot down 3 sleeves and at 9:30 AM a plane brought out remote control target plane. We shot it down on second run on port beam and it went down in flames. On course 300 degrees---20 K at 2 PM. Headed for Guadalcanal to pick up Fighter Director Officers and mail, if possible, but I doubt it."

24 May "Sea smooth, getting plenty hot. Still plenty of drills of all kinds."

25 May "In port at 11 AM. Two converted liberty ship tankers. We fueled from one. Radford in and brought our mail from Purvis. 1 SC in, YO, a frigate and a small sea plane tender. Jenkins came in at 1 PM. Standing full watches. Other ships send 1/3 of crew ashore each day."

26 May "One soundman out of gang left on tanker for States and school. B25's and P38's (twin engine fighter planes) off at 8 AM, back at 1 PM. Nice field here and pretty, but small harbor. PT boats have a neat looking place."

27 May "Rest of squad came in. 4 DD's refueled and pulled out for Bougainville."

28 May Sun. "Church on beach. One of the boys that was transferred in January on gun boat is out here and came aboard. We are using Army movies ---much better than Navy. That's a heck of a note ---Navy borrowing from Army! Orders came

in to get underway tomorrow to meet a small carrier. We are to form a hunter killer group for large Jap supply subs."

We invaded and took some islands and some islands we just bypassed and left the Japs on them. We patrolled and controlled the sea and air around them. They couldn't get fuel for the air craft they had and the only supplies they got were from subs at night. A year later US planes would fly over and the Japs would shoot at them.

29 May '44 "Underway at 10 AM with all of DD's in 42. 3 DD's went up west coast of Bougainville. One Jap Snooper (plane) flew over us at 10 PM. This Ole Man is still nutty on drills and instructions. 5 GQ today. This is the only action he has seen since he came aboard. He washed out of Flight Training in the Navy."

30 May "Up the east coast of New Island at 15 K. Water smooth as glass and the weather is hot as heck."

31 May "Sub contact at 3 AM. A ship was directly behind us, so we couldn't drop charges. Couldn't regain contact. Met carrier and 3 DD's at 6 AM. A carrier and 4 DE's tracked sub all night and sank it at 7:30 AM on third run----15 miles west of us. We sighted them at noon. Wood and cork came up from sub and a large oil slick. Two sea bags found on surface with American writing on them—one had the name, Shanks, on it. Planes off carrier making sweep out to 200 miles. We are making big circles west of 150 degrees Latitude above and below the Equator. Cloudy and rainy, a little cooler and ship rolling a little. Ideal weather for sea, no sun, cool, poor visibility and just feels good. Crossed Equator twice now."

We had no idea why there were US sea bags. We were supposed to know where our subs were and they had signals that we could pick up on Sonar. We never knew for sure if it was a Jap sub.

1 June "Still cloudy. 3 Jap cans reported 200 miles NE of us on course 170 degrees. Fighters protecting them. Urgent message sent for Des Div 42 (us) to go after them (from Halsey), but we can't have carrier. Des Div 42 ordered out. Commodore and 95% of crew mad. We have to hunt sub while the others have the fun. This happened at 5 PM. At 6 PM we turned to meet our 43 DE's. Crossed the Equator twice more."

2 June "Met 4 DE's at midnight. We four DD's took up attack stations and TF turned due east looking for Japs, full steam up. Bad visibility and search planes couldn't find them. US planes came over us at 3 AM. We turned back NW at noon. Into Admiralty Islands tomorrow. We go back to New Guinea for duty."

3 June 15 Jap ships reported N of New Guinea. No further report on 3 Jap DD's. We are below French and Manus Island at Seedlen Harbor. About 20 supply ships and plane tender and one sub went out at 3 PM. Went to beach and took ride up and across island. Saw native village, etc.. Then to bomber field and 100 B24's around. Big flight off at 9 AM. Some coming in and loading up bombs. Large flight strip on other side—Australian fighters and American planes. Gen. Kennedy is here. Went to Tangier and back to ship. LaVallette to report to TF 74 for temporary duty."

4 June '44 Sun. "Went aboard Hoggatt Bay for church. Des Div 42 ordered out to proceed to Hollandia at Humboldt Bay by 4 AM Mon. Out at 12:30, steaming at 27 K---and 3 other DD's.

5 June '44 "Met large formation of ships at 3 AM headed for Hollandia. About 21 supply ships and 5 DE's. Met 15 PT boats going out and 15 came in. Lots more in sight. About 75 AK's, LCT's, LST's, LSD's, tugs, tankers, etc. already in harbor. About 10 DD's but all are 1850 class. Fueled and anchored until 8 PM then all four of our DD's out to meet TF 74 at 10 AM tomorrow. Steaming W 15 K."

6 June "Met TF 74 and 76 at 10 AM. 4 cruisers, an Australian (Her Majesty) cruiser, 10 DD's. Reid DD left yesterday and was strafed by planes and lost one man. Japs hit our air base at Wakale (about 100 miles north of here (Hollandia) last night--- hit them all night and they were heavily damaged. We had no fighter coverage and cruisers need fuel, so we turned and steamed at 27 K to get in at Hollandia at 7 PM. Tied up and fueled from the Australia and then anchored. Announcement of invasion of France came thru at 5:30 PM. We have 31 subs between Truk and us northwest of New Guinea. 21 in Jap territory around New Guinea. Wish this war would end. It is really getting tiresome and this Ole Man makes it worse. Things are going to be rugged around here. Not much sleep. This Australian Admiral seems to know what he is doing, but we can't win a war steaming around in open sea. MacArthur isn't the man we need."

7 June "Sitting in harbor. LaVallette sent out at 5 PM to pick up pilot of one of Boise scout planes that crashed 15 miles out. Back in at 7:30 PM. Nashville took two near misses and will not return to Jap area with us. One hole in side. Boise took one near miss, but is in good fighting condition. Underway at 11 PM with all the ships we came in with except the Nashville-- going back to wait around Biak Island. Maybe now we can see a little action instead of sitting around." A near miss is when the bomb explodes near the ship, but it still can do a lot of damage.

8 June "Steaming NW at 15 K. Raining most of day. Jap Betty sighted at 3 PM flying only 15 ft above water---passed 6 miles ahead. Pushed speed up to 22 K. GQ from 7 PM to 7 AM. Went into Biak Island (10 miles off) shore. Jap planes came over at 8 PM and dropped bombs that missed the Mullenby 50-100 yards---plane got away. Number of others contacted, but none close. Surface contact at 11:15 PM--- going away at 37 K---they were 5 Jap DD's"

9 June "We are in the lead at all times and put on 35 K to give chase. Our division of DD's and one other in chase, leaving cruisers and 6 DD's behind. Closed to 7 miles and gave him a broadside from 4 DD's at 1:30 AM. Japs were making 34 K. From 12:30-2:30 AM we kept firing at intervals and the Japs did the same. Laid smoke screen and twice torpedoes were seen to pass. Once we had to turn sharp to right to miss the torpedo. At 2:10 AM a Jap ship was seen to explode in some way topside, but didn't slow. Hits were scored on another. None of our ships were hit, a few close ones, many shells overhead and one was seen to land 50 yards off bow. Their shooting was very poor. We fired 500 rounds. Crossed the Equator at 1:30 AM, turned back at 134 degrees longitude and 30 degrees latitude---further than any ships have penetrated into Jap territory so far. Ordered back at 2:30 AM. Returned at 31 K. Met TF at 9 AM and joined formation. 2 DD's were out searching for barges that the Jap DD's left. One was found and machine gunned. Steamed SE at 15 K and turned back for Biak at 1 PM. Turned back for Humboldt on orders at 7:30 PM. At 9 PM we were ordered back to

Biak to intercept 5 Jap ships reported to be headed that way. Had 4 hours sleep in last 36 hours."

10 June '44 "Pulled in along Biak at 12:30 AM, making 25 K. Searched area and found only our own PT boats riding the Jap coast. Running low on fuel, turned back for Humboldt at 2 AM. Had first shower in 3 days. In Humboldt and alongside Australia to fuel at 3 PM, then anchored. Australian hospital ship is really lit up at night. Army bombers got 4 of 6 ships we started after."

11 June Sun. "Alongside Pyro at 6 AM and took 900 rounds of 5" aboard. Out at noon with TF 74, Australia, 4 other DD's. Back to Admiralty to prepare for a landing."

12 June "Steamed E at 15 K. TF 75 closed up behind us as we entered port. Met DD Reid coming out. There is going to be a landing on Guam or near island very soon. Nashville laying heavy to one side, hole being patched. Went alongside Dobbin for repairs, food and ammunition at 4 PM. Completed loading ship at 10 PM. One small bag of mail came aboard, rest of it was sent to Humboldt Bay last night 2 hours before they received a message to hold it."

13 June "Out at midmorning. Underway at 6 PM with 2 other DD's to report to TF 76 at Humboldt for duty. Another slow tiresome job. 76 is 7th Fleet (Amphibious force)"

14 June "In Humboldt at 2 PM. Went ashore to the "city" (it was the military base) of Hollandia for Guard Mail. Nothing much left, damaged Jap boats supplies, stacks of rice. (We had just taken it from the Japs) Most huts destroyed, bomb craters everywhere and church has many bullet holes on all sides. Large Jap force of carriers and battleships reported south of Philippines. Jenkins pulled for Biak, Dutch hospital ship in."

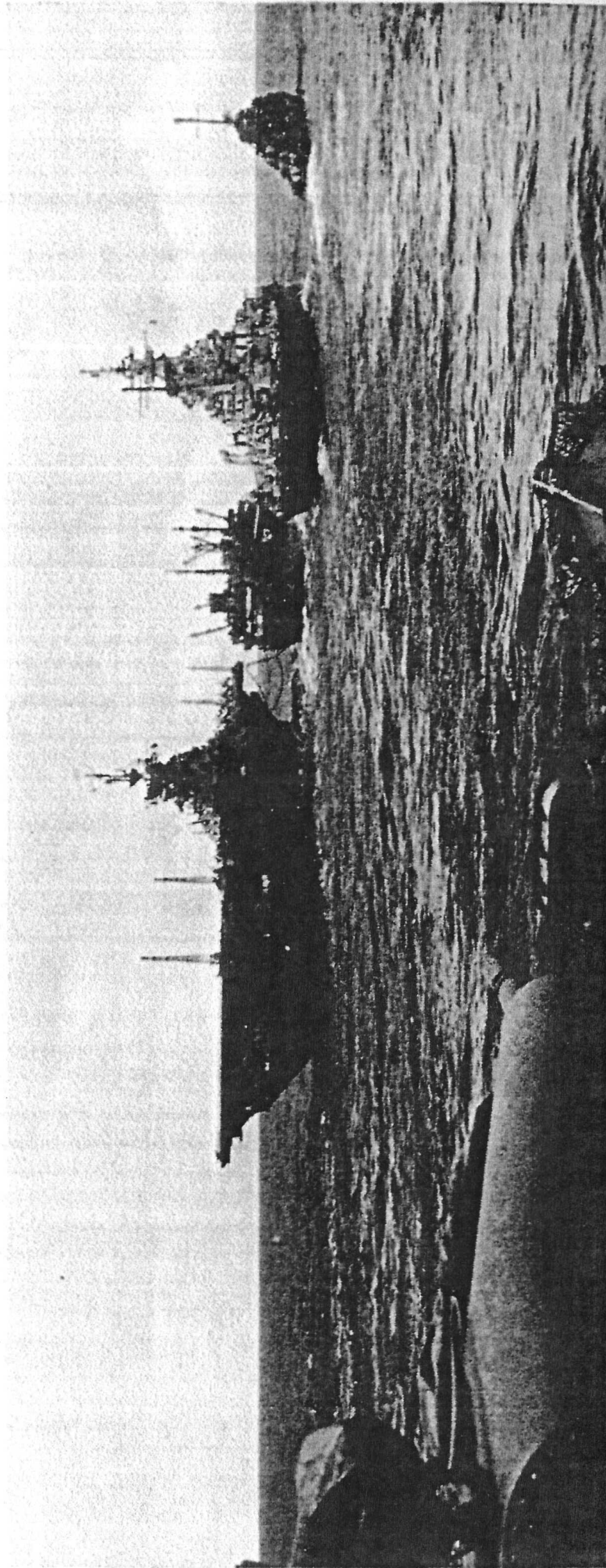
15 June "Fueled from New Zealand tanker manned by Indians, then anchored. DD Kalk towed in from up the slot (wherever the fighting was, we said it was going up the slot). A direct bomb hit amid ship on the Kalk—14 men killed, 65 wounded. We go out tomorrow. The Ole Man has been commended for Navy Cross for action last week. Glory Hunters."

Every few weeks he recommended the Commodore and the Commodore recommended him for some kind of medal or honor.

16 June "Out at 3 PM with 3 DD's that came in only a few minutes before we left. Frigate, 8 LST's and one liberty ship and us for Biak. Met DD Wilkes at 6 PM and they joined our formation. Steaming at 9 K. Going to be a show and very rugged trip. Plenty GQ. US forces on island close to Guam and B29's bombing Japs. 4 failed to return. One shot down, 2 met with accident, other unknown. We have two Colonels, two Lt. Col., a Captain and a Sgt, all engineers aboard."

17 June '44 Met Jenkins and 2 LST's that came from Wakala at 2 AM. One Jap plane closed to 20 miles during the middle of the afternoon."

18 June Sun. "Slowed to 7 K steaming west. Our planes are hitting Jap base with all they have today. Few hundred more planes would certainly help, but more are coming each day. GQ at 2 AM—one Jap plane in to 4 miles. We landed supplies on southern end of Biak. Low visibility, rainy, and our fighter coverage had to leave. No



STEAMING SLOWLY ON EITHER SIDE OF A U.S. NAVY OILER, THE CARRIER "BONHOMME RICHARD" AND THE BATTLESHIP "MISSOURI" ARE REFUELED AT SEA

Japs sighted due to the weather and they were hard hit by our bombers on their landing fields. Out at 6 PM at 9 K. Radar sure tiresome to watch with no targets all day. Wish a few Japs would come out. Days are long and dull. Army Engineers went ashore to stay."

19 June '44 "Quiet, hot day. 9 K, SE"

20 June "In port at 8 AM, fueled from same New Zealand tanker as before, then anchored. Kalk started out at noon under her own power, probably for the States. What I would give to be aboard her and leave this God forsaken place. Two LST's we had brought with us, unloaded wounded on Australian hospital ship and it started out the middle of afternoon."

21 June "A 20 ship convoy came in and brought supplies. Our next trip will probably carry us further than Biak. 5 Liberty ships steamed out, headed north. We anchored near provision ship and took on supplies all night."

22 June "Riding (sitting) anchor. Hot as heck and a dull life."

23 June Taking life easy, a little cooler—only 99 degrees inside CIC. About 20 fellows sick from some meat we had at midnight. US Task Force 72 at Saipan and they claimed to have destroyed 353 Jap aircraft to 21 losses for us, June 18. June 19 Japs lost (sunk) 1 carrier, 3 tankers, 3 cruisers and 1 DD. The damages for the Japs were to 1 battleship, 3 cruisers and 2 tankers. Jap forces consisted of 4 BB's, 6 carriers, 6 tankers and many cruisers and DD's. In US lists, our losses as nothing other than the 21 planes lost and damaged, 1 BB and 2 carriers seriously damaged. 4 of our subs are around to pick up pilots that had to land in the water."

24 June "Out to swing ship then back and fueled from New Zealand tanker and anchored."

25 June Sun. "Hot as heck, no cool area. This crew is getting in a bad way. This Ole Man is fast losing a fighting ship. His drills, inspections and no rest is driving them NUTS. A few days in a cool, civilized world could do wonders. 2 DD's pulled out at 7 PM to take a convoy up the line. The 29th we (14 DD's & CI, etc) leave to make a landing on Numfoor."

26 June "Took 10-12 tons of provisions aboard. Standing full condition watches."

27 June "Cool, cloudy day. Nothing happening."

28 June "Pull out morning of 30th instead of 29th. Cruisers meet us there. No chance for me for the Air Corps, they are cutting down on the training program and told me my job was here and too valuable of a man to lose. Lot of Bunk."

29 June '44 "Maybe a little excitement as we are going into 2,000 yards from beach and Japs are supposed to have heavy shore batteries, but imagine it will be another dull trip. All air strips are supposed to be bombed out. Underway on a sudden change of orders at 6 PM with 3 DD's, 4 liberty ships and 4 LST's. Large convoy of 15-20 cargo ships (Australia and US) came in at noon from up the line."

30 June "Making 9 K NW. In Wakale at 8 AM and anchored. Many landing crafts and large ships around. Continual stream of planes taking off and landing. Underway with landing force 8 K---15 DD's, 4 PC's, 8 LST's, 14 LCI's and a Admiral in charge on

Reid. Fletcher is two years old today. We had plenty of cake. Has averaged 8.5 miles an hour since launching."

1 July '44 "Jap planes bombed Wakale shortly after midnight. D day is Sunday, H hour, 8 AM. Shelling one hour and 20 minutes before H hour. We are between Baik and slowed to 5 K at 4 PM. 3 cruisers, Australia, Phoenix and Boise and 9 DD's caught us at 9 PM and passed ahead. Few Jap planes in area."

2 July Sun. "Cruisers and DD's opened up on beach. Destroyers went in at close range. We went in to less than a mile—used 20 mm and 40 mm—550 rounds of 5 ". At 8 AM it was so dark from smoke of gunfire and charges you couldn't see beach or ships close by. Troops had complete control at 9:45 AM. One LST was hit by machine gunfire on beach as troops landed, but ships soon knocked them out. P 51's, A 20's, B 25's and B 24's (planes) attacked all morning. One A20 went down with one engine burning. B24's doing high level bombing, other dive bombing and strafing. We pulled out at 11 AM with Radford and 9 LCI's and arrived at one of the small Schouten Islands, but too late for them to enter, so we patrolled all night. Cruiser Task Force passed us middle of afternoon."

3 July "LCI entered at 5 AM and we received orders to report in at Humboldt, steaming 15 K east. Radford left at noon for Wakale to put the Brig. General she had aboard for this trip, ashore. Prisoner released from brig after 10 days. Charges against Freeman dropped and Hill's death listed as misconduct. Search of entire ship made for a small wheel from decoding machine which has been missing two days. It is very vital, no messages can be broken without it. Was not found. Radford joined at sunset."

The decoding machine was like a typewriter and the wheel had to be put in. You would type groups of 5 letters from radio messages and it would come out decoded. There were about 20 wheels and they had to be put in the machine a certain way and the code was changed every four hours, so the wheel had to be changed every four hours.

4 July "In Humboldt at 7 AM alongside Navy tanker to fuel. Also, 2 tankers flying flag of Panama. About 35 cargo ships in, also cruisers, and DD's that were with us at Numfoor. Alongside Boots for ammunition, then anchored."

5 July '44 "All cruisers and DD's except us out at 9 AM. About 15 cargo and transports are fully loaded waiting to go somewhere. Another search made of entire ship looking for the missing wheel for decoding machine. Not found. Got an extra from some ship. No one can leave ship for any reason until it is all cleared up. I was called before the Captain because I passed the decoding room at 1615 and it was taken between 1600 and 1630."

Not only could we not leave the ship, but we couldn't speak to anyone on another ship—even if we were pulled up alongside.

6 July '44 "Out at 9 AM with 2 DD's steaming at 25 K to Wakale and out at 6 PM with 6 LST's. Joined at 9 PM by 3 cargo ships. One DE dropped depth charges at 11 PM. What a scramble aboard ship."-----GQ was not sounded, but we went to battle stations in a hurry when we heard and felt the depth charges being dropped.

7 July '44 "Making 8 K -W. Left 3 cargo and DE at Schouten Islands. Sea going tug Yuma joined us."

8 July "One Jap plane circled around before dawn. We were in at beach of Numfoor at sunrise and we patrolled all day. One cargo ship and 2 DD's are also here. Underway with LST's and cargo ships running in circles all night. Few Jap planes around."

9 July Sun. "Back into beach at sunrise, but couple Jap planes came in just before dawn. One bomb hit some fuel on the beach which burned until noon. We got in a few shots, but no good. Left at sunset with LST's and DD's except for Jenkins which stayed and went with cargo ship and Radford which has Fido (Fighter director) aboard. They have been able to do their job correctly. (Fighter planes intercepted Japs coming in) For the past few days we have had the average of 4-5 hours sleep with 6-7 GQ each day."

10 July "Steaming east at 9 K, dropped off Yuma at small island below Biak and picked up 6 LCI's. Met 3 DD's, 8 LST's and 5 cargo ships going to Numfoor at noon. Another search of ship made, but no wheel. I was told to prepare for first class the first of Aug."

11 July "Left formation with 6 LST's at 5 AM and went into Wakale while others proceeded to Humboldt. One DD shelling pocket of Japs about 7-8 miles above Wakale. Anchored at 7 AM, out at noon, sent a message to 30 PA's at Humboldt for orders. Back in and anchored, out at 4 PM with 4 LST's for Humboldt making 9 K. Only 3 cargo ships and 2 LST's in Wakale, but the bombers are steadily in and out. C47's (cargo planes) formed a continuous stream up the line, none landing here."

12 July "In Humboldt at 8 AM, fueled, then anchored. Lots of cargo ships and about 12 DD's are in. 12 LCI's, 6 cargo and 4 LST's left steaming south at sunset, empty. (no troops) No mail has left the ship since the 4th, no person can leave or talk to anyone. The fellows on the tanker called us the "secret ship".

13 July "One Div of DD's pulled out this morning. We leave around the 18th. There are to be 15 seamen and 15 rated men to leave for new construction as soon as this wheel situation is cleared up. One radar man is to go. I was asked if I would rather take first class and stay or be transferred as second. Send me as second class. We are running short of food, but no one can leave or come aboard ship as yet. Some other ships bring our mail—none has left in over two weeks."

New construction meant that I would be assigned to a ship under construction and it also meant that I would have 30 days leave back in the States. Another 2 or 3 months would probably be in the States getting the ship ready to go.

14 July '44 "Late afternoon 12 LCI's loaded and a DE, frigate and 3 PC's pulled out, headed north. I am to leave when they do transfer the 30 men--- Alabama bound!! A letter came in from Honolulu requesting more of my physical condition for the Air Corps. They failed to send it from San Francisco. 2 DD's came in late."

15 July "Radford pulled out for Admiralty Island to repair radar. Notified I was not to be transferred, need me aboard. Can't get the rest of my flight physical until wheel matter is cleared up. Have to go to the Wright to get it. Blue Ridge came in to anchor arriving from Sydney."

16 July '44 Sun. "Allen (ship) and a few DD's stayed out during night. We got a few provisions aboard. Investigating Board came aboard today. We are the only division here."

17 July "Underway at 7 AM with 4 DD's out for AA firing. Back in and fueled at 5 PM, then anchored. Our Exec, Lt Com. Hughes has been ordered to Mustin as Skipper. He can't leave until wheel matter is cleared up. We also got orders not to leave on new duty until all is clear."

18 July "Loaded on 150 rounds of 5" and some 40mm and 20mm ammunition. Wright, sea plane tender, sent out yesterday. No one seems to be making any progress on the wheel matter. This ship has really fallen from the top of the list as a good fighting ship. No one cares what happens. The Skipper isn't for the men or at least, he doesn't show it. Morale of crew is way down. They need a rest. One of the boys in our gang got a letter his father died and for two weeks now he has been unable to write his mother."

19 July "They have begun investigating the wheel matter a little. Freeman, the fellow who killed Hill in March, is to be tried at a General Court Marshall for murder. Anderson, DD that was hit in Marshalls last Feb with us, came in also-- 3 other DD's came in from the line."

20 July "DD that didn't go out with us a couple days ago, went out for AA fire. Investigation board was aboard all day and will be each day."

21 July "Radford came in early and brought 300 cases of beer in for us. Surprise that the Ole Man letting it come aboard. He gave away what we got last time in Noumea. Ole Man recommended General Court Martial for Woods (Communication Officer), Harris—he had the watch when the wheel disappeared. All had lawyers."

22 July '44 "Investigation came to an end at mid morning. No results announced. Out in a couple days—another landing on Jap territory. One man off Radford was drowned late tonight when boat capsized."

The whale boat off the Radford capsized. There was always 3 or more in the boat, but only one drowned.

23 July Sun. "Mail finally left ship, but all personnel still restricted. Captain (GQ John) has to face General Court Martial after loss of wheel.

30 LC'sI, 5 APD's, 2 US frigates and 3 Australian frigates, 5 supply ships and one DD steamed out at sunset heading west."

24 July "Underway at 8 AM with 3 DD's at 16 K to Wakale and anchored. At 4 PM all ships that left Humboldt yesterday and LCI are loading. Artillery fire on beach can be seen. Few Japs around. Heavy explosion heard during movie."

25 July "Underway at 1 AM with our Div 125. 30 LCI's began practice landing on Wakale at dawn. Back in and anchored at 2 PM."

26 July "Underway at 7 AM alongside 2 Merchant Marine ships for fuel. She is loaded with a company of Negro Engineers and their equipment. Then back to anchor. Japs are only 500-1,000 yards inland and firing continuously all the time---especially at night." They were shooting mostly at the troops on the beach.

27 July "We are anchored about 4,000 yards off beach. During movie 3 large splashes caused by shell fire 1,000 yards off our beam. Underway at

10 PM with 10 DD's, 5 APD's, 4 PC's, 19 LCI's, 8 LST's and a tug. Steaming at 9 K. D Day the 30th. As usual, Sunday. Landing on NW corner of New Guinea by-passing some Jap strong points. (going in behind them.) Two islands, Amsterdam and Middleburg and the mainland were the strong points. Much further west than any ship has ever gone in combat."

28 July '44 "Passed few miles south of Biak at sunset. Beautiful moonlight night. Hot as heck. Picked up 3 ships at 12 miles coming straight for our formation, but no one bothered them until last minute when they were 3 miles away. Navy way of doing things."

29 July "We are steaming up and above New Guinea and are going to swing down at an angle to target. One Val (Jap dive bomber) ventured out to 20 miles of us at 3 PM, but our P38 fighter coverage promptly shot him down. Our cruiser TF passed north to east this afternoon. Went to GQ at sunset."

30 July Sun. "Our cruisers passed ahead at midnight and steamed west of target. In one firing line at dawn—1,000 yards off beach. We are sitting dead in water as all other ships. LST's and LCI's and all other ships got in close with all guns trained out to the beach. At 7 AM (15 minutes before sunrise) first troops hit the beach. Not a shot was fired by any ships or men. No Japs around. One man wounded in accident. APD's and LCI's left at 8:30 AM, also PC's. No Jap planes sighted at any time—very quiet. Headed out with LST's at 5 PM with all but 4 DD's—they are staying behind just in case. We'll be back with supplies soon. This place called Sansapor."

31 July '44 "Swanson ordered out at 9 AM to pick up crew of plane that crashed north of Numfoor. Met 4 DD's and 6 LST's at noon. Tug left us and joined them. Went to GQ all night for the third straight night. Passed south of Biak at midnight. The restriction on ships has been lifted. No rates (promotions) to come out this month."

1 Aug. '44 "Steaming back from landing on N.W. New Guinea. At Sansapor with 5 DD's, and 8 LST's. Formation split at sunset and our Div and 4 LST's continued SE and others turned into Wakale. Met Nashville and Trathen going west---they just came from Button where Nashville was repaired."

2 Aug. "Swanson passed us at 4 AM steaming for Humboldt which we entered at noon, fueled and anchored. Quite a few supply ships in, also US hospital ship, Comfort. I went ashore at Hollandia for Guard Mail and also to Blue Ridge."

3 Aug. "Supplies came aboard, still all Australian. 15 fellows transferred off for the US".

4 Aug. "4 APD's left for Sydney. 4 DD's came in."

5 Aug. "Tender Dobbin came in and dropped anchor. We underwent battle problem made up by Radford. Flag ship, Wastach, came in from east coast of USA."

6 Aug. Sun. "Went to church on Blue Ridge. Rained a little during services. Went ashore at 1 PM Frenchie, Allen and I had a case of beer.(I didn't drink any of it.) Marshy land began about 100 ft. from water, the only road was along beach. Japs had supply dump here, now US occupies it. Much Jap stuff laying around, including bombs and other ammunition. Many have been killed here accidentally. 2 soldiers came along and took us for a ride thru the mountains. It's all supply and repair base and then a look at Hollandia from high on the mountain.

Hollandia is situated between two towering cliffs. Big warehouse being built in place of grass huts. Two fellows (one with bad shoulder and has been in a sling 2/3 of the time since leaving States the last time has 34 months tho out here) were transferred aboard Comfort, hospital ship."

Frenchie drank one can of beer and the rest of the case we traded a soldier for the use of his Jeep. That is the way we toured the island.

7 Aug. '44 "Took off 500 rounds of 5" ammunition and replaced by new. Took Guard Mail to Blue Ridge, Dobbin and DD of Div."

8 Aug. "Underway at 8 AM with our division, steaming NW. Had a little practice firing at each other on fantail. In Wakale at 4 PM and anchored. Underway at 10:30 PM with our 3 DD's, 9 LST's and one liberty cargo ship for Sansapor. Still much firing on beach at night."

9 Aug. "Steamed west at 9 K, passed SW corner of beach and turned NW at midnight. Frigate Coronado joined us at Biak."

10 Aug. "Passed group of LST's and DD's during afternoon and tug, Virco, turned back with us."

11 Aug. '44 "In at dawn and ship began unloading while DD's took up patrol stations. We laid in close to beach most of the time while Commodore received information and issued instructions. Joined by 1 DD and 1 frigate shortly before noon. Underway at 9 PM with 9 LST's, 3 other DD's and the tug for Woendi Harbor at Biak. GQ half the night. Not one Jap plane or ship has been spotted anywhere near here in weeks. This damn Ole Man says this ship needs more drill and GQ and no liberty or recreation. I'd hate to see a ship with a crew any lower in feeling."

12 Aug. "Cool, cloudy day and everything quiet except for Ole Man and GQ—5."

13 Aug. Sun. Turned into Woendi at 9 AM with Radford, 2 LST's and tug. 2 DD's and 7 LST's proceeded on to Wachela and Humboldt. We anchored and fueled from Trinity and then anchored again. 3 liberty ships in, also couple PC's, Seaplane tender, Tangier, 5 PBY's are on one side of harbor. 39 native canoes with from 1 to 10 in each canoe around ship. Men wear very little, woman wear sarongs and look like the devil. One had her head shaved as those on the Admiralty---pregnant by the Japs. Underway at 5:30 PM with Radford and met 6 LST's, 2 liberty ships and 3 frigates outside coming in from Wakale and we joined all but 2 frigates that turned into Woendi and headed for Sansapor. Met 3 PT's south of Biak at 8 PM that had a little encounter with a surfaced Jap sub, no damage to PT's."

14 Aug. "Plenty hot, on this trip transformers in sound gear, BL, SC-2 and FD have melted and burned out. All equipment working on emergency repair. May go out at any time."

15 Aug. "In by Amsterdam and Middleburg to Sansapor at dawn. The biggest air strip ever constructed since the war is underway at Sansapor. 9,000 yards or 4 1/2 miles. All ships steamed out for Wakale and Humboldt at sunset except for 3 liberty ships, a frigate and ourselves. Commodore went aboard the Jenkins for return trip. We are to patrol for 2 days or longer."

16 Aug. "Patrolling around island. Plenty hot."

It was hot all the time and we got heat rash, especially around our waist and legs. The only way to get rid of the rash was to lie in the sun. Often when we did that, we would lie on the deck on a blanket and play cards. Of course, we had on sun glasses, but we had to keep our eyes off each others eyes----the glasses would reflect the cards in our hands!

Frenchman and I liked to sleep under the torpedo tubes. We would lie on a piece of canvas on the deck, used our shoes for a pillow and we were under 5 torpedo tubes. They were about 2 ½ feet off the deck, but it was cooler there. That meant there were thousands of pounds of TNT right above us.

17 Aug. '44 "At dawn 3 DD's, came in with 6 LST's and tug, Virco (it's really getting a workout—has made every trip of all convoys in). At sunset began forming screen for LST's as they took formation. Left with 2 other DD's, Virco and 6 LST's. Rained all night which made it very cool."

18 Aug. '44 "Met 2 DD's, a frigate and 6 LST's steaming for Sansapor. Hot as heck again."

19 Aug. "Passed south of Biak shortly before dawn. Our LST, tug and 2 cans turned into Woendi at 9 AM and we are proceeding to Humboldt at 16 K."

20 Aug. '44 "In Humboldt at sunrise and fueled then alongside tender, Dobbin. 3 DD's and 1 DE alongside, too. Many liberty ships, one Dutch hospital ship are in. One fellow has a couple days left to serve his 5 days in brig sentence. Another fellow has his foot in a cast—a bench fell on it a couple weeks ago and broke it. New sound officer came aboard fresh from the States."

During this time the fighting was always going on in the air and on the beaches. We were moving around escorting and protecting the LST's, etc. so they could get troops and supplies moved.

21 Aug. "Machine shop on Morris caught fire late afternoon. 2 cans dropped anchor."

22 Aug. "Much old parcel post came aboard—only newspapers and magazines. Went ashore late afternoon to see a show at 7 PM put on by Bob Hope, Jerry Colonna and two other men, Frances Langford and a tap dancer whose name was Thomas. Lannie Ross was also there in charge for the Army. A fellow in the Navy who is a trick dancer stole the show. Very enjoyable, but nothing like the States."

23 Aug. "A disabled DD pulled to anchor and I had Attack Teacher on the Dobbin."

24 Aug. "Went to Dobbin midmorning for Attack Teacher. Guard Mail to Blue Ridge, Dobbin and Nicholas—they came from Tulaghi and Treasure Island."

25 Aug. "O'Bannon and Taylor came in. I took exam for 1st class. Went ashore on beer party all afternoon. Went up to see Horseman and Rogers, who were transferred off two days ago for school in the States. Horseman goes to Chicago for 6-8 months and Rogers to San Diego for 3-4 months. It was swell to be on sandy beach and swimming again. Ray fell off truck and knocked unconscious. Rushed to hospital, but hadn't regained consciousness at 6:30 PM."

26 Aug. '44 "Underway at 1 AM with 2 DD's and stood in entrance ready to go anywhere on a moments notice. Sound bouy picked up sound--- thought to be a sub and we moved out just in case."

27 Aug. Sun. "2 DD's went out with Australia cruiser. 5 cans and an Australian mine layer came in about noon. We laid in entrance until 11 AM, then went in and anchored. Went to Dobbin for Attack Teacher." (Sonar School)

28 Aug. "Underway at 8 AM with Jenkins outside 25 miles and did a little AA firing at sleeve towed by B26. Got the usual "eagle eye" from the plane for our shooting. We got both of our sleeves first runs. In at noon alongside the New Zealand tanker to fuel. 3 DD's are in. Wilson CQM (Chief Quartermaster who does the navigating) has foot in a cast from breaking it on beach 5 days ago."

29 Aug. '44 "Went to Dobbin Attack Teachers and got soaked in heavy rain squall coming back. Guard Mail trip to Blue Ridge, Morris, Dobbin, Radford and LaValette. Ray returned aboard from hospital—nothing wrong."

30 Aug. "4 AD (troops on them) came in from Sydney. Went to Blue Ridge and back for Guard Mail. What mud there is on the beach and I got my share. The Ole Man had the guts to say morale on here was top. I would hate to see it any lower. No one gives a darn for anything. Slow rain has been falling all day and makes it cooler."

The beaches were sandy, but when you got on the land it was very muddy. There was so much traffic with the military vehicles and you could get mired down in the mud. Some of the islands were flat and nothing to them. Some of the islands were just mountains and some a mixture of both. There were waterfalls in places and they were beautiful with the clear water. The streams on the islands were perfectly clear—they could be 50 feet deep and you could see all the way to the bottom.

31 Aug. "Ole Man had coffee pot taken out of radar shack and forbid reading or writing in there, also. He can't see why everyone isn't working all day for the "good of the organization of the ship." This life is hard enough without his screwy ideas. I have heard many of the fellows wish for this ship to get hit, so as to return for repairs. I'll take my chances and sometimes I think death would be better than continuing this way. A fellow needs a rest once in awhile. Set clocks back one hour to -9 zone."

1 Sept. "Underway at 7 AM with Blue Ridge, Wastach and 11 other DD's and calibrated radar all day with B24 as target. In and anchored at sunset, took over listening watch." Listening watch was always at the harbor entrance.

2 Sept. "Underway at 6 AM, fueled, then back and anchored. One of the fellows in the deck gang slipped while going down an escape hatch and pulled it closed on 2 of his own fingers—cut one off just above hand and other smashed badly. Went to Captains Mast as witness. Babcock, one of the fellows in gang that came all the way from States with us in '42, gave some guff and refused to carry out orders of Lt jg Bannister from Ga. Can't say I blame Babcock in one way. Bannister is a hell of a guy to get along with, but in the US Navy you have no freedom of speech—or any other freedom. Babcock was given a recommendation for a General Court Martial. Bannister doesn't get along with even one other officer. One day someone is going to poke him. Radford has serious engine trouble."

3 Sept. Sun. '44 "Went to church on Blue Ridge. Plenty hot all day. Underway at 7 PM with one LSD making 11 K."

4 Sept. "In past Wakale and anchored at 6 AM. One Australian transport and a tanker and 7 liberty ships at anchor. The Ole Man still winning the war while standing full watch."

The period of time with GQ John as Skipper was the worst of my time in the Navy. He only thought about furthering his career in the Navy, was a Glory Hunter and didn't care about the men.

5 Sept. '44 "3 DD's came in at dawn and anchored. Many LCI's also dropped in. Much firing to be heard from island, machine guns and artillery. The nights of late and now, decorated by the moon are beautiful; really gets you down."

6 Sept. '44 "Underway at 4 AM with 2 other DD's and many LST's and LCI's. Made practice landings on Wekala. Back to anchor at 6 PM. Hughes left for Humboldt at 10 PM."

7 Sept. "Underway at 6 AM out to swing ship and check compass, drills all afternoon, then back to anchor at sunset."

8 Sept. "Underway at 1800 steaming SE at 12 K for Humboldt."

9 Sept. "Alongside tanker at Hollandia at 6 AM, then to anchor. 3 DD's also in. Taylor is taking the Radford's position in the next operation. Radford supposed to return to the States for repairs on her engines. Loaded on provisions for ourselves and another DD, also mail for all ships at Wakale. Got a letter from home telling that Son got in the 23rd of Aug for 21 days. Wish I were that lucky, but glad for him. Radford received orders to leave for the States as soon as relieved. Mr. Woods and Harris were transferred off last night.

20 new "boots" came aboard for duty." The boots were new men, just out of boot training.

10 Sept. Sun. "Underway at 8 AM, turned NW for Wakale at 25 K. Traveling alone. In past Wakale and alongside tanker that is only a few weeks out of the States. LaValette came alongside us to get her provisions. Hughes (DD), many liberty ships, LST's, LCI's anchored and loaded to brim with men and supplies. After fueling we dropped anchor."

11 Sept. "Underway at 9 AM with 11 DD's, flagship Wastach, 2 Australian transports, 1 LSD, 5 APD's, 12 LST's, 8 minesweepers and 49 LCI's. A total of 88 ships. These ships that were not at Wakala and came from Humboldt. Steaming NW at 6 K. One man on one of APD either fell or jumped overboard after dark and was picked up by an LCI. We are going to make a landing on Manatai Island and it's 100-200 miles north of Halamahero. D day is 15th, H hour 0830. We go in between two islands to less than a 1,000 yards of the beach to give the Japs a working over. Not much opposition expected. Carriers and cruisers join us soon."

12 Sept. "The day we left Humboldt they took off Wilson with his broken foot, but left the other two cripples aboard, also sent back a fellow who can hardly walk because of stiff legs and recommending that he be sent to shore duty. Fine chance he'll have on here. Passed NE of Biak during afternoon and picked up to 8 K. If only I had left for the States in July as first thought, I would be home with Son now. Wish I

had never heard of radar and sound. Crossed the equator at 2200 NE of the NW tip of Biak."

13 Sept. '44 "Joined at dawn by 5 cruisers. Shortly before noon 6 CVE's (small carriers) and 8 DE's made a total of 119 ships not counting 6 LCT's being towed by LST's. All this makes the TF 77. 2 carriers lag behind the formation a few miles to furnish air coverage and AS." (air support)

14 Sept. "Steaming 8 K north of Sansapor. Hope we can hit with surprise, but don't expect any trouble in air or sea, maybe a little on land. The Japs had planned to sink our invasion force and warships in the Marshall's before Saipan raid, but we moved out a few days early, luckily. The planes were to fly from Saipan, Guam to Truk and hit our force and land on Milne and Watju. Drills all day, routine GQ. No sleep and won't be in the next few days. Plenty hot, temperature hitting 100 to 105 in radar shack. 3 new radios and radar detectors put out plenty of heat."

15 Sept. "The 6 carriers, 8 DE's and DD Taylor left us at 1 AM to remain out from land and send in planes. Passed between Morotoi and Halamahero and going in to land and bombard on SW tip of Morotoi. Curisers and DD's shelled beach. We fired 679 rounds 5" on the shore. Australian cruisers sprayed us a couple times with shrapnel. Only two Japs found on beach—they evacuated some time ago. We went in search of small craft SW of island and found none. Active volcano can be seen erupting on NW tip of Halamahero. LCI and all but 4 LST's and APD's left. GQ all night as we patrolled."

The volcano was beautiful at night. There were flames and bright lights coming from the volcano—a pretty sight.

16 Sept. "Large convoy of LCI's, LST's and cargo ships pulled in. One Jap fighter, a Zero, came over and 6 F6F got on his tail, but he was too fast and tricky for them. Flew directly over us, through heavy AA from beach and hopping below and above our fighters. One Jap Diana shot down. One of our PBY came in at dawn with no IFF and was nearly shot down. Last 40 PT boats pulled in. Carriers and planes hit Halamahero yesterday. 15 B25's sprayed island with DDT at 11 AM to kill all insects. Pulled out at 1800 with 3 DD's, 4 LCI's and 12 LST's. One LCI turned back because of engine trouble. Hopewell about 30-40 miles north of us drew his first blood by shooting down one of two planes that attacked her shortly after sunset. Wastach also pulled out. From the looks of fellows with bandages and cuts, you would think we had a major battle. Freeman got his hand behind a hot shell and lost tip of right index finger. About 100 Japs found on entire island—they took to the mountains. One DD shelled them as they took cover in a ravine during afternoon. Steaming at 9 K."

17 Sept. Sun. "Still hot as the devil, but had all day off and slept most of it after 48 hours of GQ on the SC-2 (air radar). No exercise is beginning to tell on me. Stand all radar and sound watches sitting down, also GQ and phones have to be worn. (We sat down, had on ear phones and talked into a microphone) Has gotten my fanny sore, even tiresome to sleep on my back and ears are tender and hurt to lay on them. Even have 4 or 5 bad teeth, but have seen no dentist since Mare Island, July '43. It's a great life, if you live thru it!"

18 Sept. '44 One fellow on an LST was buried at sea at 1500. Twelve more fellows to leave when we hit Humboldt. Took another shot in the arm. (inoculation)"

19 Sept. '44 "Passed 30 miles north of Biak. Rained most of the day."

20 Sept. "Passed Wakale shortly after sunrise. Went to GQ middle of afternoon while a LST fired on sleeve. This Ole Man going to run everyone nuts yet. One of the radiomen failed to get a message addressed to the CDD 42 aboard because of station interference—entirely beyond his control—but one of the other ships received it and sent it over. For failing to get the message, the Captain held Mast and broke Gwillianny from 2/c to 3/c (from 2nd class to 3rd class) That's the Navy that I hate!! GQ when only a few miles out of harbor for practice. In Humboldt at 2130, finally dropped the hook (anchor) at 2300."

21 Sept. '44 "Underway at 5 AM with no permission to go alongside tanker and they told us in a nice way "get the hell" out of the way. They have other ships to fuel. Went alongside liberty ship and took on ammunition, then anchored. Took on provisions during afternoon, underway and alongside another tanker at 1600 to fuel. Only about a dozen cargo ships in, 4 transports, DD, hospital ship, Comfort. Dobbin and Australian mine layer still here. Dutch hospital ship came in from up north middle of afternoon. Got a letter from home telling me of Bernard Hall getting killed. Those are the things that hurt, but Page sometimes I think I would be better off dead compared to this life. 15 fellows left for the grand of USA today."

22 Sept. "Underway from alongside tanker at sunrise and anchored. 5 APD's are also in, one of the APD was with us in San Diego last Jan. Underway at noon and proceeded to Wakale at 29 K, anchored at 5 PM. Only about a dozen liberty ships in."

The shape of the liberty ships was different and that is how we knew what they were.

23 Sept. "Underway at 5 AM, went alongside merchant ship to fuel—all we need is 15,000 gallons. After tying up, the Ole Man decided we were rolling too much when the fighting lights on wing of the bridge were smashed. Also smashed in steel at the 40mm amid ship. Anchored, then underway at 9 AM with 7 liberty ships. Joined by 1 DD, 8 LST's and 2 tugs as we pulled out of Wakale. They came up from Humboldt. Steaming at 7 K.

24 Sept. Sun. "Joined during morning by 2 DD's who came alongside to receive mail we brought up from Humboldt. Also 4 LST's and oil barge came from Wendo."

25 Sept. "Passed north of Biak during early morning and crossed the Equator at 3 AM. Sun is really beaming down. A geographical ship joined us during early morning. Laid an 8 pattern depth charge on a sound contact that was false at 2000. Slowed to 4.5 K mid afternoon."

27 Sept. "In Morotoi at dawn. Dropped LST's on east side, cargo ship to west. Already a dozen liberty cargo ships in loading and dozens of small craft. One PT blown sky high by hit on fuel tank off coast of Halamahero. Several DD's patrolling around. During the afternoon we dropped along SW coast to pick up 2 LCT's with scout troops (they were on the shore scouting around) and escorted them back. 4 or 5 Jap planes passed overhead on way to bomb beach on landing on Morotoi. So close to land we

had chance to fire on only one, but they gave them a warm welcome at beach. None shot down. Only one plane came at a time, about one hour apart until midnight. Passed quite a few PT's on trip back."

We constantly had enemy planes overhead. We would shoot down a few, they would hit some of us and it was never ending. We were escorting ships taking men and supplies into the beach and we were protecting them from air attacks and shelling from the beach. We patrolled at night to keep subs away and planes from strafing. The planes often came one at a time with long intervals just to keep everyone awake and aggravated.

28 Sept. '44 "Back to patrolling station at 1 AM, still GQ since midnight of last night. In alongside merchant ship, Andrew White, for fuel at 8 AM. A B24 is in shallow water about 100 ft off Able Point, seemed to have burned slightly or been hit a couple hard blows. Shortly before sunset we and the Taylor steamed NW and patrolled all night at the NW entrance of the channel between Morotoi and Halamahero.

29 Sept. "Left Taylor and returned to unloading beach at 9 AM. Our doctor went aboard Stevans to assist with an appendix operation and came back shortly after noon. We are to remain at least another night so we steamed back and joined the Taylor, same as last night. Condition red for 45 minutes at Morotoi.

We did have a doctor on board and there were always illnesses and accidents and of course, injuries from combat.

30 Sept. Back up to base at 8 AM, left Taylor patrolling. Laid to all morning—getting orders and information. 2 B24 ran low on fuel and made belly landings on uncompleted air strip at 1600. At 1700 another B24 with the outboard starboard engine conked out, made a forced landing. Underway at 1800 with 13 LST's, 2 small Army craft and 1 liberty ship at 8.5 K. Jap planes over as we pulled out and heavy AA fire from beach. One plane passed almost directly overhead, but we were too close to land to pick him up on radar. LST fired in all directions except where the plane was. Flares and firing seen on Halamahero. Suppose PT are holding field day." That was a cynical statement as the PT boats really didn't do much, but run errands.

1 Oct. Sun. "3 DD's are with us. Sea is very unusual, large swells, ship rocking and rolling heavily. For the first time since the Marshalls, waves are coming over the side. At 1400 went to GQ so one gun could test fire 25 rounds of AA. The Ole Man doesn't give a darn for the crew and whether they get any rest or not. This firing could have been done any time before we got in and two guns are always manned on condition watch and they could have taken care of it. We secured from GQ last night at 1 AM for the first time in 4 days. (we quit GQ for the first time in 4 days—we had been on GQ day and night) That radar is driving me nuts. 2 DD's turned south at 1900 for Sansapor. Hopewell came from the west and passed us going east, making 18 K."

2 Oct. '44 "Sea has quite a roll to it. This Ole Man should be in the States as chairman of a scrap paper drive instead of a skipper of a ship out here. Everyone is always wrong, but him and he trusts no one to do his job properly. He makes plenty of mistakes, but they are always funny (in his opinion)."

3 Oct. '44 "Crossed Equator at 2 AM, NW corner of Biak. DE Shelton was torpedoed shortly before dawn as it and 3 other DE's were screening (protecting) two CVE's, NE of Morotoi. 15 men wounded, 3 seriously, 11 men and 2 officers missing or dead. 211 picked up by DE Rowell who stood by. Shelton was to be sunk by Rowell's gunfire, but later decided to try to tow her to port. At 1300 Rowell reported contact and commenced attack. Sub tried to jam equipment and sent a signal to confuse her on first attack. 7 attacks on the sub were made in all. Explosions of third attack brought sub to surface, but it settled quickly. US sub sighted 10 miles east of this one at 1500. Reported that a PBY landed on water at 1400 with engine trouble, but no damage. We sighted him and pulled alongside 1600. All 9 men on wing, radio in perfect working order. Taylor is left behind to stand by until boat from Wendo, 50 miles west, comes out to tow PBY in. Most of the green gill (seasick) boys have dropped from the rail as the sea has smoothed quite a bit. The moon is full and beautiful—really gets you down looking at it. Taylor took PBY under tow for Wendo at sunset. Patrol plane reported that the Shelton went under at 2230 before tug reached it to tow it in."

4 Oct. "Slowed so as to reach Humboldt at sunrise instead of middle of night. Passed Wakale about noon. We get a five day lay over this time in. No chance of getting back to USA until after first of year as they intend to have the Philippines all secured by the end of Dec. We begin the 20th by a landing on the southern group as other forces hit different spots."

5 Oct. "Taylor joined us shortly after midnight. In Humboldt at 8 AM alongside Dobbin for repair. Mustin came alongside of us. At least 100 ships are in—many Australian and also US. APA's are in including Allen and Fayette. 2 DD's, came in later. Went ashore during afternoon on beer party and met Bobby Chesnutt there. Heck of a way to spend my twenty-third birthday!"

I went on the beach and Bobby was there. Neither one of us had any idea the other one was there. Beer could not be drunk on the ship, but they put anywhere from 20-50 boys on the landing craft to take to the beach and 20-30 cases of beer. I spent the time talking to Bobby. I would go to the beach on the beer party, but didn't participate in the drinking.

6 Oct. "Lang (DD) tied up alongside and she was towing Shelton when it went down."

7 Oct. "Still alongside Dobbin. The sun is really bearing down."

8 Oct. Sun. "Underway mid morning alongside tanker and fueled, then underway shortly after noon at 28 K for Admiralty Islands. Radford is in Navy base at Mare Island, Calif. And all hands are getting 30 days leave."

9 Oct. "Arrived outside harbor in Admiralty at 6 AM. Joined 10 APA's, 11 LCI's (landing craft infantry) and 6 DD's. 2 DD's went to southern island and practiced landings. We ran in circles all night with 3 APA's and DD's Jenkins and Anderson as we reached port too late to enter."

After practicing, they left too late to get back into port, so we had to protect them and go in circles all night.



10 Oct. '44 In harbor at 6 AM, tied up alongside La Vallette. We are now with the Third Fleet. About 200 ships in harbor. 6 BB's, 40 ships, 6 CL's (light cruisers), 21 converted carriers, 65 DD's, 45 DE's, 3 subs and all kinds of APA's, PA's, AK's, repair ship, Whitney, and 2 other DD tenders, big floating dry docks. 2 Australian ships in. All the new ships of the Third Fleet are staying close to Philippines. A letter came out saying no ship is to leave for the States or any place for liberty except in case of emergency as all ships shall be needed in the push just beginning."

11 Oct. "All told, including landing craft, there are over 500 ships in harbor. Shortly after sunrise, we fueled and returned to tie up to LaVallette. Anderson has taken Radford's place in our Division. Shortly before sunset, 2 Australian cruisers and 3 of ours pulled out, also a number of tin cans."

12 Oct. "At dawn all but 5 CVE (converted carriers) pulled out with all cruisers, battleships and many DD's. This is about the largest supply base in this area. At night the beach with all its many lights of all colors resembles a city. Underway at 1430 with 3 other DD's, 2 PC's, 10 APA's, 2 LSD's and 1 carrier. Steaming NW at 11 K and will join more forces between now and D day, the 20th. Landing on Leyte of Philippines. APD's will reach there a couple days ahead with demolition squads. For a change maybe we can see a few dozen planes. This old routine is getting tiresome."

When we were at a supply base we were out of the war zone and consequently, the base and ships could have lights and there weren't many Jap planes overhead. That is why it was so irritating to go thru so many drills when we weren't in the war zone. It was also tiresome and boring. Even so, we still didn't get any rest.

13 Oct. "No rest between all of GQ John's drills. The crew is hoping we will get hit so we'll have to return to the States and that "Johnny" (Skipper) will get killed. Can't say I blame them. Crossed Equator at 9 AM.

14 Oct. "On course since noon yesterday. Passed 250 miles due N of Humboldt at noon today. Sun is really beaming down. Heard Hornet and Wasp (the original Hornet and Wasp were sunk at the beginning of the war and these were new ships replacing them) reporting Jap planes were attacking them near the Philippines."

15 Oct. Sun. "200 miles N of east end of Biak at noon where we were joined by 4 cruisers, 1 CVE, 16 DD's, 16 APA's, 32 LCI's, 12 LSM's, 25 LST's, 2 SC's, 4 tugs, 3 PC's and Flag Ship in command, Blue Ridge. Also 1 LSD and 1 tanker."

16 Oct. "Slowed to 7 K. DD's fueled today from cruiser. We went alongside Phoenix shortly after noon for fuel. Hear quite a few Jap programs and it seems funny to hear American forces called the enemy. We go thru Jap mine fields into Leyte Gulf on to San Pedro Bay to land forces near the air field and town of Tacleban about 30,000 population."

17 Oct. '44 "Sighted a large US Task Force, 75-85 ships shortly after dawn. Passed 60 miles of SW corner of Palau Islands at 6 AM."

18 Oct. "Battleship and cruisers bombarding today where we are to land. Aircraft also hit it. Jap propaganda programs come in all times of the day, telling of the defeat of the American forces and tonight they said a landing on the Philippines was

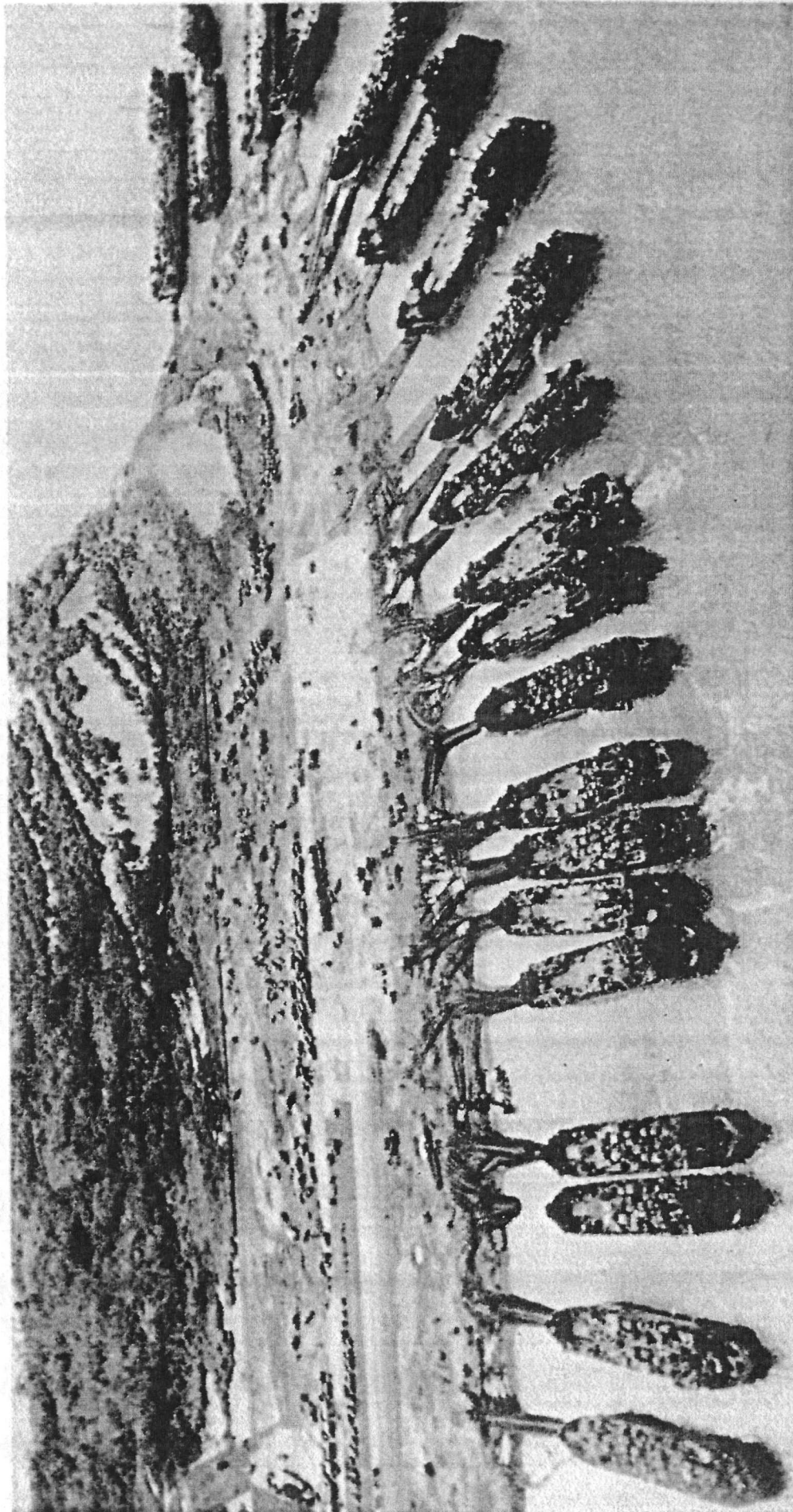
impossible. If one were to be tried, it would be repulsed with heavy loss to the US. Couple days shall tell."

19 Oct. '44 "Got a message telling us Japs are expecting us to land soon as mine sweeps began cleaning the channels. Ships and planes bombarding and Rangers landed on outer islands."

The Rangers were Army men who were an elite group that went ashore and scouted the area and reported back what was there and the condition of the island. They were very skilled in fighting techniques, too. They had to maintain themselves because they could not be picked up for a few days.

20 Oct. "APD's joined us yesterday afternoon. Passed entrance of Leyte Gulf at outer islands shortly after midnight. 71 miles to Tacleban. 6 BB's and cruisers going to bombard. DD Ross has hit a mine and has a can tied to each side to keep her upright and afloat. 3 men killed. Jap Betty dropped out of clouds about 8 AM and released 2 bombs off Russell's bow, no damage. We and other cans had perfect shots at him, but he flew thru it all with no damage. First troops hit beach right at 10 AM, met no opposition, but as other waves started in, mortars opened up. 4 LST's hit as they beached—one on fire, hit in sick bay, many wounded. All LST's had to leave beach until late afternoon and then unloaded all night. Heavy fire, mostly mortars, encountered all day by troops. BB's, CA's, CL's and DD's continued to shell beach all day. We have a sideline view—doing nothing but patrolling, waiting to be called for any emergency. Picked up 2 Filipinos in a canoe, but they didn't know much information. General MacArthur and President of Philippines on Nashville and made a speech to people of Philippine Islands and tried to broadcast it to the US at 1500. Jap torpedo plane came in unnoticed at 1630 and put fish in Honolulu and got away without a shot being fired. Honolulu burned and took a heavy list, but still had some power and tried to beach herself, but power gave out. Covered all night by DD's making smoke screen. We fired on 2 planes during the night, but no hits. Drill Happy Fletcher."

21 Oct. "Jap dive bombers hit landing beach at dawn. One Betty shot down. HMS Australia hit by bomb on bridge at 7 AM killing 1 Lt, seriously wounding the Commodore, Captain, navigating officer and 4 other men. Exec officer had control in emergency steering. Task Force we passed a few days ago also made a landing a few miles below us. Jap planes came in a few at a time strafing and bombing most of the beach. Fighters stopped two big raids before they reached us during the afternoon. A Fillippino wearing Army khaki, no shoes and medical insignia came out to ship in canoe. His Army uniform was pressed and creased. Was part of the Army before the Japs came. Japs have taken most everything they had. The fellows gave them all kinds of clothes, candy, cigars, cigarettes, apples, etc. Honolulu, Australia and some other ships left at 1500. We left at 1600 with LST's, 1 APA, 1 AK and 3 DD's. A few planes raided us after dark, but no damage. Started SE after getting out of entrance at 9 K. Met large convoy coming from Guam shortly after midnight—over 100 ships. Ross tied up to tug being made ready for trip back. Unloading, LST's were under fire from Japs all day, but town of Tacleban was taken from the Japs. DD's laid smoke again shortly after sunset to cover ships. BB's are still sitting around. At least 600 ships involved in operation."



TWENTY LVTs PUSHED INTO THE EDGE OF LEYTE'S TACLOBAN AIRSTRIP AND UNLOADED ACROSS THE EARTH RAMPs BUILT UP WITH BULLDOZERS

The patrolling we were doing was going up and down the beach about a half mile out and we had contact with the men on the beach. We were their artillery and we shelled machine gun nests and anything that needed to be hit. We had a chart and they had a chart and they would say, "Fox 22". We looked on the chart and fired one shot to where we thought it was. They would respond to go up or down. We fired one shot at a time until they said "Bullseye", then we opened up and shot all five guns at the same time until we knocked it out.

22 Oct. '44 Sun. "Days are plenty hot at sea. Sweat all the time regardless of what we do. Jap propaganda program called the landing a bluff and say they have nothing to fear. Wonder how their Victory Parade turned out the 20th. A convoy of 10 APA's, 2 LSD's, 4 DD's and 5 APD's passed us late afternoon steaming south at 11 K. New moon really looks good. One of the Filipinos aboard is from Manila, his wife is in the States, but family still in Manila."

23 Oct. "Nice quiet, hot day."

24 Oct. "Passed 100 miles SW of Palau Islands at 4 AM. Have a rooster aboard that the Philippines gave us and we named him GQ. Japs attacked Morotai by air today—bombed and strafed US hospital ship, Comfort. Also 1 hour and 55 minute air raid on troops and ships at Tacleban. US claimed to have shot down 46 Jap planes and US sub claimed hits on Jap CVL, BB and CA."

We were given two roosters, but one was washed overboard after a couple days. The one we called GQ went wherever he wanted on the ship and on deck. Several days they had him crowing over the loudspeaker. He was still alive and well when I left the ship.

25 Oct. "At 2 AM Jap BB, cruiser and DD steamed in to attack our ships in Leyte Gulf. Action began at 3 AM. Jap forces still attacking during morning by planes from carrier. We have no report on damage to either side as yet. Our old BB's, California, Tenn and Maryland the only ones there--also 3 or 4 cruisers and DD's. Wish to heck we were still there, better than running around with LST's. One report came in that 3 or 4 Jap BB's, cruisers and DD's were chasing 3 US CVE(two that went up with us) and 5 or 6 DE's. Commodore asked for permission to turn back, but didn't get it. We fueled from AK just in case. Commodore has written a letter recommending this Ole Man for the Legion of Merit. That's all these Navy fellows live for and die for—"GLORY". Jap fleet is in 3 groups and have the ships at Leyte Gulf bottled up."

26 Oct. '44 "Slowed to 7 K, passed 200 miles NE of E corner of Biak at 2000 last night. Crossed the Equator at midngiht. The 3 old battleships of ours in Leyte Gulf fired about half of their 14" ammunition and think they held up the Japs from coming all the way in. They stayed at entrance all day and early morning reports that the Japs are retiring to the north. Jenkins radioed that she is escorting a damaged CVE. The starboard engine of Jenkins is giving trouble so she is running on port engine only, was not hit. No report on any damage to either side. We heard one ship say something about 4 damaged Japs and heard we lost at least one CVE. Imagine it was heavy."

Adm. Halsey was the commander of a TF of 3 carriers and he was covering the back of the landing force (us). He was to protect us. The Japs sent 3 carriers out as a

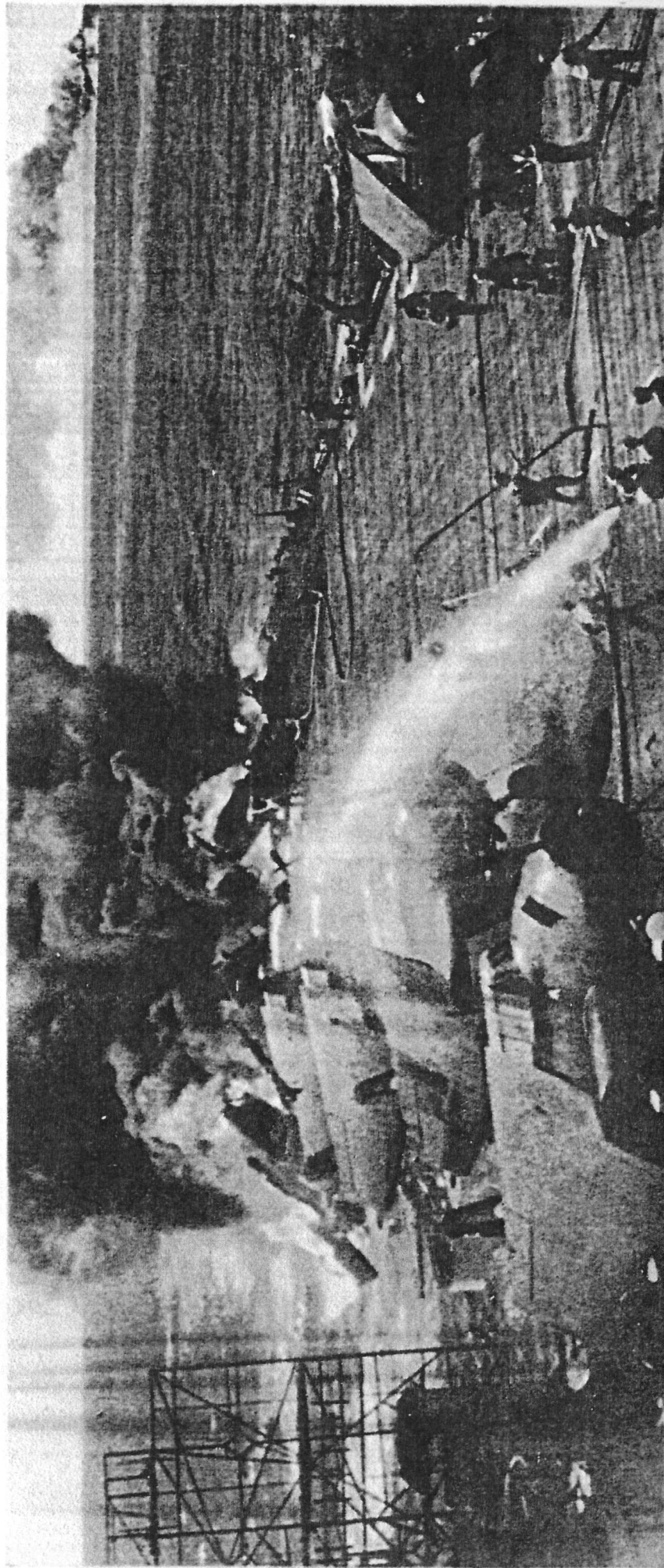


HALSEY WAS BOSS OF THE THIRD FLEET



SPRUANCE COMMANDED FIFTH FLEET

Kamikaze was the name (meaning "divine wind") that the Japanese navy gave its suicide pilots; the army fliers, who joined later in self-immolation against U.S. ships, had an analogous term, *Tokko Tai*. Organized suicide was not attempted until the Philippine invasion was under way. According to the Japanese story Vice Admiral Masabumi Arima made the first Kamikaze attack on a carrier of Halsey's fleet off the Philippines Oct. 15, 1944, but he must have missed: no U.S. ships were hit between the 14th and 18th. Nonetheless he lighted "the fuse of the ardent wishes" among his fanatically courageous pilots and they soon began crashing regularly on U.S. flight decks, to the bewilderment of the two dissimilar admirals (*above*) who alternated as fleet commanders: flamboyant "Bull" Halsey of the Third, shy Ray Spruance of the Fifth (they used the same ships; only the fleet numbers changed). Censorship prohibited mention of Kamikazes for six months, lest Tokyo learn how effective they had been. Then Halsey trumpeted they were only "1% effective." Postwar records show that the Kamikaze rate was astoundingly effective: 474 hits on U.S. ships for the 2,550 planes expended (18.6%). Fortunately the Japanese had not started their suicide tactics until the U.S. was rich with ships.



A PHILIPPINE-BASED KAMIKAZE PILOT MADE A FUNERAL PYRE FOR HIMSELF AMID PLANES PARKED ON THE STERN OF LIGHT CARRIER "BELLEAU WOOD"

decoy to lure him away from us. They were actually the last carriers the Japs had. They did not have planes on them, but no one knew that. Halsey had to decide whether to stay with us or go after them. He decided to leave. He attacked and sunk all three Jap carriers. The Jap battleship and other warships that were attacking us had much superior fighting power than we had. They could blow a DD out of the water before we could even get close to them. There was faulty communication and they did not know that Halsey left. They left us because they didn't want Halsey to attack them. Another way the Lord determined the outcome of the battle.

27 Oct. '44 "At entrance of Humboldt at 5 AM. Going in when we received orders for us and LaVallette to proceed to Palau, which we are doing at 27 K. If we had kept up our speed yesterday and night we would have gotten there yesterday afternoon and gotten our mail. Crossed Equator at noon. Sea plenty smooth, feels great to move along again. Little cooler." The Skipper wouldn't let us get our mail.

28 Oct. "Heavy clouds all night and rain all day. In lagoon at very northern tip of Palau Island. Alongside Navy tanker (only 2 months out after 4 months in States) and then anchored. Most of APA's from Philippines in, also supply ship, 2 hospital ships, Hope and Bountiful, and about dozen DD's. About 25 PBM's and a few PBV's laying around 2 tenders. 1 DD was tied up to a repair ship with bow full of 5" and 8" shell holes received in Philippines. CVE, Suwanee, came in with considerable damage. All told of 18 CVE's, 3 were sunk and 9 damaged. Only 6 remain up there. An LST was towed in by tug---seemed to have been hit and burned. Underway at 1500 with 15 APA's (empty) and 4 DD's at 13 K for Guam. Cruised almost due N until clear of Jap Islands.

29 Oct. '44 "Sea is rougher than usual after heavy winds. Turned NE. Ole Man wrote a report that the reason the Fletcher failed to shoot down the Jap planes in Philippines was due to an inexperienced and green crew. He is about the greenest in the bunch. This ship has really gone down since he took over."

30 Oct. "Half the trouble with this Navy lies in men like the Skipper. No one on board likes him—even the other officers despise him. He finally retracted that cause from the report on the Philippine landing. These type men never think of anything but how to get more medals regardless of how obtained."

31 Oct. '44 "At entrance to harbor of Guam at 7 AM, large force of SCT's and LST's came out. We patrolled while APA's entered which lasted until 1500, then in and tied up to APA, Leonard Wood, for fuel. 400 men off CVE on board her. On Oct 25, large Jap BB, 8 CA's and CI's and DD's caught our force of CVE's and DE's in early morning as they came in from night patrol. US force didn't see them until distance closed to 15 miles. No planes in the air as it was very early and all planes aboard were equipped with depth charges which they dropped on the Japs and then went elsewhere for bombs and torpedoes. One DE made a torpedo run and scored 2 hits, she was damaged by gunfire, but got away. A second DE began a run, but never finished it—caught a full salvo from BB and nothing was left. Midway caught bomb in the supply of torpedoes, bombs, etc. and blew up. About 500 men got off. Gambier Bay, CVE, was hit and could only

make 5 K and as she fell behind, a Jap cruiser closed on each side and pounded her beneath the waves. Only 6-8 got off alive, but official reports say a few more. Princeton, CVE, was also sunk. US planes fought off the Japs and many went in to dives and never pulled out, but heavy damage was inflicted. They chased the remaining ships all the way to entrance of Leyte Gulf. Most damage was done by Jap land planes."

1 Nov. '44 "Still alongside Leonard Wood, got some provisions from her. One CVE in, unloading new F4U (Corsairs, fighter planes) for Halsey's force."

2 Nov. "Went ashore (Guam) to get ship store supplies with the store keeper at 9 AM. Many troops on docks, etc. being loaded on APA's. Went in by Old Pan American plane ramp, also what used to be their hotel and Marine barracks----both were shot up. Only front and side walls of church in place and many bullet marks around. Looked at air strip and only Marine fliers F4U and one night squadron--F6F. Plenty wrecked Jap Betty's and Zero's shot, burned and smashed. Went over to NSD (Navy Supply Depot) and got a truck load of supplies and on my way back to ship went by to see where the Navy has the natives housed. They speak perfect English and dress as US people. Little dark, but many of the young girls look keen. On dock, a LT Col. wanted a ride back to the Leonard Wood as his unit is leaving. Tomorrow we leave for Noumea with them. Commander Tweed is back on the island and is very much disliked by the natives. He didn't seem to appreciate the help they gave him and cost many of their lives. The LT. Col. told us that fighting wasn't too rough. Marine loss was heavier than the Army. The Japs had quite a number of women with them which were found dead in caves, etc. Japs beheaded about 200 natives, all totalled. Japs bombed Saigon about 2 AM. Ole Man was ready to fight war at Guam."

The Navy Supply Depot was nothing but supplies stacked in huge piles on the side of the hill. There was not a building or tent---just out in the open. Guam had just been taken back from the Japs for a few weeks.

3 Nov. '44 "Underway at 5 AM with 4 DD's and same 15 APA's we brought up. Headed for Noumea. Suppose they'll call that "hell hole" liberty. The Commodore had the guts to say if this ship was offered a choice for liberty at any point in Australia or back to the States, he would protest it. The Ole Man was the same way. They want more medals, never think of the men."

They didn't want liberty at all. Some of the ships would have a few days liberty, but we didn't. They wanted to stay there in case something happened. Didn't want to miss any kind of a medal!

4 Nov. '44 "Still on course E. 12 K. Sea is very heavy, plenty of rocking and rolling. An order was issued forbidding anyone to mention in any way, anything about the B29's. Quite a few out here, or to say anything of the suicide dives the Japs made on our ship. Since the beginning of the Philippine operation they have been taking a heavy toll on our ships this way. 2 and 3 BB's have been hit, this way and also CVE, etc. and a number of DD's."

The Kamikaze or Suicide planes were loaded with bombs and the pilots would fly the plane right into the ship. It was an honor for the pilot to die this way for his country and for the Emperor. We were fortunate that we never got hit. Three or four



MASS OF AMERICANS STARTED THEIR LONG HIKE TO PRISON CAMPS



PRISONERS, CARRYING THOSE WHO FELL, STRAGGLED INTO CAMP



WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER, HANDS TIED BEHIND THEM, THE PRISONERS WERE BEATEN ALONG THE 85 MILES OF THE INFAMOUS "DEATH MARCH"

times we shot them down and they crashed close enough to splash water on the ship, but they never crashed on us. Ships in front, behind and to the side of us all were hit that way.

5 Nov. Sun. '44 "Notice was posted to the order that it is O.K. to tell we were in the Leyte Operation, but tell nothing of it. Passed 300 miles due north of Truk at 4 AM. Went alongside Leonard Wood. Picked up Guard Mail which we shall take to Enewetok. We are to stay 7 days in Noumea. Ole Man must be sick as he told Exec to make some recreation plans for crew in that "hell hole".

Truk was still occupied by the Japs and we by-passed it. Truk was an island that had a coral reef 15 miles out. It completely surrounded the island and had only a couple places that ships could enter. It was heavily mined. Earlier there had been plane raids on the island. At that time, 50-60 subs were outside the reef to pick up American pilots that were shot down. We never did try to take Truk.

6 Nov. "Left formation at 0300 and proceeded to Enewetok at 15 K. Our 7 day stay in Noumea has been cancelled."

7 Nov. "Entered Enewetok Atoll at 7 AM alongside tanker and fueled, then anchored. One CVE, few DD's, DE's and many liberty ships sitting around. Quite a number of PBM's (4 engine planes) in. Trembath, Quartermaster, who got off at Mare Island in July '43 came aboard. On a AM and been out only 3 or 4 months. He's now Chief. Underway at 1030 and joined our formation at SW corner of Atoll at 1300 on a course due south. B26 towed target for one hour while all ships fired."

We had a Yeoman (secretary) aboard that was 63 years old. He had had 33 years in the Navy and had retired in the 30's. He was talked into joining the Navy again for "limited shore duty" in Charleston. They told him he would only have to come and recruit men. That is what he did for about 9 months. Then he was shipped out and on the Fletcher. He always told us that he was on "limited shore duty."

8 Nov. '44 "Sea a bit smoother. About \$1,000 worth of fire fighting equipment missing----that's what it cost the Navy. Turned a little E."

9 Nov. '44 "Howorth came alongside and traded movies, also other DD's did the same. Ole Man has decided morale is a little low and now have movies during the hot, stuffy day. Heard a little of the elections returns and then later Dewey's withdrawal."

10 Nov. "Crossed Equator at 1 AM. Sea is smooth as glass again. Same old Solomon weather (hot and sticky). One of the fellows found his bunk cut down the center when he went to climb in last night. Doesn't know if someone thought he was in it or not. Ole Man had more 5" firing during afternoon and same old GQ's."

11 Nov. "Turned due W to return to Admiralty Islands. Then probably go to the Philippines. Things are going bad up there. Only 750 miles from Noumea and 1200 miles back to Admiralty Islands. Bunch of the fellows had a meeting tonight and Exec. Attended to hear their gripes."

About 20-25 fellows met with the Exec. and demanded that the next time we went into port the Skipper WOULD have someone get the mail. They said routine GQ's and drills should be cut down and the men needed more recreation. The Exec. said he would tell the Captain.

12 Nov. Sun. '44 "Turned up NE coast of Santa Isabel. Howorth left at 7 AM for Tulaghi and returned at 1600. Went alongside to exchange movies, then alongside La Vallette for same purpose."

13 Nov. "Passed NE tip of Bougainville at 8 AM and up NE coast of New Ireland. Captain Mast line as big as Chow line. One GM 2/c (gunner's mate) from NY that was a few days AWOL Aug. '43, GM 2/c from GA and two (no good S 2/c (seaman) from NY and California) had caused nothing but trouble. All got recommended for General Court Martial. In brig under heavy guard."

14 Nov. "Lots cooler than usual for past couple days. Rain most of time and no sun. 2 GM taken out of brig and now PAL's." (Prisoners at large)

15 Nov. "At entrance of Manus Harbor shortly after noon and APA's began to enter. We entered, fueled and anchored. 6 CVE's, 1 CL in harbor. Honolulu in dry dock and only a few supply ships, etc. in harbor. No DD's only a few DE's. One Jap plane came over yesterday afternoon and spent 2 hours looking around. No one paid him any attention, then he dropped bombs on air strip and got away O.K. Last Sat. an ammunition ship blew up with all hands, also a DE along side getting ammo. 15 men were killed on a DD by flying shrapnel, some a distance away. New Commodore for division, Manuel Martin, came aboard our ship."

16 Nov. '44 "Went aboard DD tenders at 3 AM that were damaged by explosion of ammo ship. Ships over a mile away had men killed---a total of between 600 and 700 were killed. 1 cargo ship has big hole in bow where a bomb exploded. 4 new men came aboard. Still no mail, but plenty hot."

17 Nov. '44 "Left ship at 5 AM for NSD (Navy Supply Depot) to get radar spares parts. A big and well equipped base, (Manus) but too much red tape. Went down 10 or 12 miles and back. Got quite a bit of ice cream and cake, but not enough. Ship got orders to get underway at 1500. Speed boat took us out and we were the last 4 aboard just before she pulled out. One fellow left on beach. Left with 3 DD's and 15 APA's for Leyte in Philippines at midnight. Hospital ship came in. Passed CA (heavy cruiser) being towed in by a tug. Was hit in Formosa."

18 Nov. '44 "Ole Man made little speech to all hands on fantail and gave reasons for all his senseless doings, also says we have big operation coming up early in Dec. 13 men were left with recommendation of General Court Martial in connection with the meeting last week. Crossed the Equator."

19 Nov. Sun. "Hot as the devil. 3DD's joined us. Passed 6 DD's, one with both stacks missing, 4 cruisers, 1 Australian and 1 old BB headed SE. Freeman, the fellow who killed Hill was among those transferred."

20 Nov. "We are to rush back from this trip for a new operation. Warned to standby for a local storm and very heavy winds and sea."

21 Nov. "Typhoon passed ahead of us. All we got were a few heavy rolls. 2 unnamed US ships were "hit" by Jap "suicide" planes. Heat is really on."

22 Nov. "Nicholas sank a sub and O'Bannon shot down 2 of 12 attacking torpedo planes along here a couple weeks ago. Passed 20 miles SW corner of Palau at 4 AM yesterday. GQ one hour before sunrise. 1 DD picked up US pilot who had been shot down 2 hours before by Japs. 2 or 3 Jap planes seen during the day. A few

around after dark, but only 2 attacked about 2100. One was over formation and dropped torpedoes aft of Abbot, intended for APD, but luckily missed. The other closed to us 2 miles. All ships firing, but neither Jap plane touched. We met 2 large convoys coming out as we entered Leyte Gulf. O'Bannon and Reid patrolling entrance for 2 subs seen earlier today."

23 Nov. '44 "APA's begin unloading at dawn. Many ships in, but only supply and cargo, no warships. Hospital ship, Hope, at anchor. Rained all day. 5 Jap planes over us. One Jap on low run past astern shortly after noon. Our orders to proceed back to Humboldt cancelled and we have to spend a week here. 3 DD's fueled and joined convoy that left shortly after dark. Rest of DD's anchored around APA's. Few Jap planes over until 2100 and each time they came over, we would get underway. (we wanted to be moving, not stationary targets) 1 AK hit by bomb. Today is Thanksgiving, but no turkey or anything unusual."

24 Nov. "More ships came in. BB's and cruisers are about 20 miles out in Leyte Gulf where they stayed moving in circles. Jap planes over during the morning. 1 Judy made a run on Leonard Wood (APA) and dropped a bomb 50 yards of port bow. No damage. P38's closed in and gave chase. Circled and came in for another run. 4 P38's on his tail and set him afire as he pulled out. Tried to crash as he was in flames on a APA, but fell short. Another dropped a bomb short of APA mid afternoon and P38's shot down 3 attacking Jap planes. We couldn't fire as P38's were too close. Underway at 1600 with our 6 DD's and 15 APA's. Passed BB's and cruisers in Leyte Gulf. 1 Jap came in 1900, and we opened fire, but he got away. 1 P38 shot down by Japs during afternoon. As fighters went to land on strip late afternoon, 2 Jap planes were waiting. P38's spied them and a hell of a mess took place before one Jap was shot down and the other got away. Lt. Bong got his 34th Jap yesterday. Anderson has gone back to US for repairs."

Bong was an Army Lt. and they realized that he had the most kills of Jap planes. Suddenly he was promoted from Lt. to Captain and then shortly to Major!

25 Nov. '44 "Steaming SE 13 K. Fighters from CVE's overhead. A Jap Snooper reported our position number, etc. Intelligence force intercepted message."

26 Nov. Sun. "Turned back with 2 DD's at 8 AM at 10 K looking for a convoy headed for Leyte. We are 75 miles NW corner of Palau. We had our Thanksgiving dinner, turkey and all."

27 Nov. "Turned back SE at 10 K. Low on fuel—only 40,000 gal. TBF (torpedo bomber) spotted out convoy for us and reported them 9 hours behind time. Joined them at noon. 1 DE, APD's, AK's, liberty ships and tankers, also 2 Army tankers with aviation fuel. Went alongside New Zealand tanker and took on 36,000 gal. of fuel after sunset."

28 Nov. "Heavy clouds and rain and very welcome; cool and protection from Jap planes. In Letye Gulf passed BB's and cruisers (same ones) at noon up San Pedro Gulf and dropped anchor, but got underway on Condition Red. GQ since before sunrise. 27 Jap planes attacked BB's and CL's last night hitting BB Maryland and CL St. Louis by suicide planes. 13 reported shot down and dove in for the ships. Quite a few

Jap planes over late bombing air strip. We got 35 bags of mail aboard that this new Commodore requested flown up. He's a right guy and makes GQ John's blood boil."

29 Nov. '44 "Alongside tanker to fuel at 1 AM and then back and anchored. O'Bannon came in followed by 6 2200 DD's (new destroyers). Jap planes over most of the day. Alongside ammo ship mid afternoon. Had to get underway when only half of ammo was aboard. Jap planes began attacking. 1 DD, Aulick, was damaged by a plane crashing into bridge. She almost rammed us as she came by because of heavy fog and smoke that is laid each night. Few planes over during the night."

Whenever I wrote that the "Jap planes were over" that meant air attack. They were strafing and bombing and we were fighting all of that time. All the warships were able to lay down a smoke screen and we did it to make it difficult in air attacks.

30 Nov. '44 "Very quiet day. A DD and Hospital ship, Bountiful, came in, loaded the wounded and left. No Japs from 9 AM to 2100, but over most of the night. Out of the battle force in here, 2 BB's, 1 cruiser and 4 cans have been hit. Phoenix steamed up in Pedro Gulf early and then back out again in a very short time. This next month is going to bring us plenty of action. Radford was repaired at Pearl Harbor."

1 Dec. '44 "Rain most of day and only a few alerts. Jap sub sighted in Leyte Gulf about 15 miles out at 1500. One ship reported that a Jap torpedo was fired, no damage. Anderson has returned to US to repair damages received here. Abney Read was sunk last Oct. Filipinos must have Jewish blood in them the way they come alongside and trade."

2 Dec. "Howorth joined her division and a bombardment for her LaVallette and us was cancelled and 3 2200 DD's were sent to Ormoc Bay entrance to patrol instead. Still heavy weather. Cleared a little during afternoon and 3 Jap planes came in. One was shot down. A C47 (cargo plane) landed in water 10 miles out."

When we patrolled in that instance, we were on the lookout for subs, planes and ships and then reported anything to the others so there would be an alert for it.

3 Dec. Sun. "The 3 2200's took a beating from Jap planes during the night. Just as they began their patrol, planes hit them and sank Cooper and one DD heavily damaged. 3 dead on one. They came shortly before noon. None of our planes could help much even though they tried. We got underway at 0730 and went alongside Navy liberty ship for 25 tons of supplies and then fueled. Ross (DD) is sitting in dry dock. A few days ago she shot down a plane in daylight raid. It fell on #5 gun and bounced into dry dock. Underway at 1600 out into Leyte Gulf with 3 DD's, 4 cruisers and 4 cans to go in circles around Leyte Gulf. We're the protecting battle force now!"

4 Dec. "Tanker came out and fueled some of DD's. The 2200 cans at Ormoc Bay were shelling transports when planes came in and while firing at planes a Jap DE came in close and laid torpedoes. The one that sank broke in half. We got radar jamming gear from the Lang. We really got all working gear now. We may make milk run."

5 Dec. "Went down in Surigao Strait and for 3 hours beginning at 7 AM, Boise kept us at GQ reporting land, etc. as bogies. Most all ships went in for supplies. Japs hit ships in lower end of Surigao Bay at noon, put fish in AK, strafed and damaged LCI,

LST, DD Mugford and LaVallette on patrol a little lower. (they were a little farther down the entrance than we were) Late afternoon more Jap Vals (dive bombers) came in. We got the first as he made a run. He was on fire and tried to crash into us, but we made a sharp turn at the last minute and he lost control to change course and that put him 50 yards clear in our wake that was then on starboard bow. Nicholas and a cruiser got another and P38 got two more. In an attack at the same time LaVallette had 2 close ones, but no damage. Mugford took bomb hit by #1 stack, put fire out and made it into Surigao Bay O.K. There are quite a few of the fellows off the Cooper hiding from Japs on Ormoc."

The men off the Cooper that were not killed, managed to get to the island and they hid out until they could be rescued, but it took several days to get them. They were taken off the island one night.

6 Dec. '44 "San Pedro Gulf at 9 AM and anchored. Underway at 11 AM. No mail, even tho it's on the beach. Joined LaVallette at Point Dog (code name). She was also hit yesterday. 2 frigates came in with force and had 176 men aboard they had picked up from an AK sunk coming in yesterday. 2 DD's joined us at 1600 with 4 LST's and we began moving south. 30-40 Jap planes passed 18 miles W of us after sunset. More DD's, LCI's, etc joined us after dark. Came behind thru Surigao Bay. 3 DD's and us left formation at 2200 and proceeded to Ormoc Bay at 30 K. 5 Jap DD's and 4 AP's reported in the area. We steamed in by Ormoc 2 1/2 miles off shore, but found no ships. Light area (used search lights) and then shelled beach. Ran back and forth from 0100-0300, then went around small island. Found no ships, so headed S at 30 K. LCI's, LST's, etc landed at 0600. Jap planes around most of night passing all around, but no damage to anyone. 3 passed directly overhead, but we or other DD's failed to hit them. Back in Surigao Strait at 0700. Then out and joined all 4 cruisers and DD's. All DD's get assignment and 2 CL's leave, only Portland and Nashville and 2 cans and ourselves remain running around. Couple days ago, LaVallette shot down plane that tried to crash on her, but turned and plane landed 50 ft. off starboard fantail. Pieces of plane and pilot fell on ship after explosion. 4 cans left 1700 to make "milk run" to Ormoc. Few cans relieved us and we went in to fuel, then anchored."

The milk run was the lower SE end of Leyte where the Japs could come in. When we went there we said we sitting ducks because the radar didn't reach very far because of the mountains.

8 Dec. "Alongside ammo ship, then anchored at noon, repairing bearing in one engine. DD's that went in with landing Ormoc after we left were hard hit. 2 cans sunk and also a couple damaged. Quite a few killed and wounded. Radford came in and hospital ship, Mercy, is in. Planes we saw afternoon of 6th were loaded with troops that landed near air strip. Did quite a bit of damage. Also about 25 Jap planes bombed field that night. Ships that landed near Ormoc were under a 9 hour air attack—bombers and suicide planes."

9 Dec. "Lamson came in with tug towing her—plane crashed by #1 stack and bridge. Burned entire superstructure. 75 men burned, but only a few killed. 1 LST took 3 bomb hits and then a plane crashed on her. Radford boys got 2 weeks at a

Navy "rest camp" in Honolulu—had salt water and washed their own clothes. Navy Rest. Underway at noon with 2 cruisers, back in with 2 different cruisers at 1500."

10 Dec. '44 Sun. "Has been a little cool for the past few days as it has been raining most of the time, but sun beginning to come out again. Big explosion near air field. No planes over lately, but many alerts. 6 planes attacked and hit Hughes in Surigao Strait."

11 Dec. '44 "Hughes came in towed by tug. Plane hit amid ship port side, big hole in deck and sides of fire rooms. 4 killed and 15 missing. We begin our trip to Mindoro tomorrow with D day the 15th after postponing from 5th. If we live thru this, nothing can stop us. Hughes is anchored very close on our bow. 3 and 4 engines were flooded, the Jap plane except for its wings, went right thru deck into fire room. Only 15 men reported missing at first—more now. 17 dead were taken out from below, and they were placed on fan tail. Also 2 dead Japs taken. Jap convoy sighted by 4 of our DD's, going into Ormoc. A group of our ships including DD Howorth and Edwards under air attack at 1800 asking for coverage. We went alongside tanker and topped off, then anchored. WAC's are now at the headquarters in Tacleban and the Philippine girls together with them make quite a town. There is a tense feeling among the crew, but morale is much higher than before."

12 Dec. '44 "With good leadership, this could be a first line fighting ship again. Suppose MacArthur shall take credit for this operation and none of it is due him. His refusal to give us fighter coverage was the reason for 10 days delay. We still don't have any Army coverage, so Navy told him to go to hell. Halsey's carriers are covering us. Army is too slow while we take a beating. Our 6 ships were sunk and 16 damaged last night. Reid hit in Surigao Strait last night and sunk in 2 minutes. 2 ships were damaged at Ormoc. Mac Arthur says war is over there, not here!! Underway at 1400 with 30 LST's, 35 LCI's, 22 PT's, 10 LCM's, 5 VM's, 8 APD's, Cruiser Nashville, and 13 DD's. Began the 8 hour trip thru Surigao Strait at 1900, our speed 9 K."

13 Dec. "Reid lost very few men. 250 got off, only half off Cooper. She holds sinking record—went down in 35 seconds. PT's failed to find anyone on beach. Ward didn't lose a man. Mahan lost 50-75 men. Joined during early morning by 3 cruisers and 3 DD's. Battle Task Force of 6 CVE's and 4 BB's and DD's ahead 10-30 miles furnishing fighter coverage. Quiet all morning. We are at GQ. At 1500 without warning, low flying planes came from over land and crashed into Nashville. (Flag ship for this operation.) 5 men blown over side picked up by DD. Plane hit bridge and all communications burned out. Flag transferred to DD Dashiell. Jap planes over (attacking) all afternoon—bombs dropped all around. Jap fighters shot down—5 in all and one flaming Jap plane made a dive for us and then Hopewell and fell short. Another DD hit by bombs and flaming plane. 4 Japs over at 1900, no CAP (our planes) over us. Two Jap planes fell, no damage to us. Nashville and DD left 1930 going back to Leyte. 125 killed, 100 wounded and many missing on Nashville—among them, Chief of Staff of Admiral in command, 1 Col., 1 General and other big shots wounded and one missing. 40mm magazine exploded. Only 1 Jap came in during the night and did not close formation. (He didn't come over, just stayed away and watched us). We passed by Bohol Isand into Sulu Sea and turned NW after sunset by Negros. DD Horworth hit

during air raid on CVE and BB in afternoon and passed us going back to Leyte able to make 20 K."

14 Dec. '44 "Few planes attacked the TF 20 miles south of us about 8 AM but no damage. One plane dropped bombs near YMS's (mine sweeps) that were sweeping ahead of us just before noon. BB Task Force back at channel between small islands and Pary Island. They patrolled around here unless needed. Their aircraft over us. After sunset 3 Jap planes closed to 7 miles and took a look and disappeared behind formation. Jap ship reported moving out of Surigao Strait. Our 3 cruisers and 7 2200 DD moved out ahead to meet anything."

The 2200 DD's were new ships. They had 4 twin 5" gun mounts and they were a little larger than we were. We had 5 single 5" gun mounts.

15 Dec. '44 "1 Jap ship began closing our formation from rear a couple hours before sunrise until only 6 miles from us. 2 2200 DD's fell back and shelled him until he exploded. In alone at beach at sunrise. Natives on shore waving, but as we fired warning shots over their head, they scattered. Ships bombarded for 10 minutes, probably killed many natives and cattle we couldn't see. Troops landed and met no opposition. 16,000 to go ashore. Jap planes came in low and fast at 8 AM and for 10 minutes firing on all sides. 5 crashes, 2 into LST's, DD's tried to fight fires on her, but one exploded and damaged one can. Fighters shot down one. LCI and 4 DD's left at 9 AM. 1 plane hit Howarth radar antenna and it fell in water alongside exploding bomb. Shrapnel made holes in bow. 1 man missing and 15 wounded. Jap ship sunk early this morning--was an AK. 1 of Jap DD sitting in harbor had been damaged and left and run aground. Walker set it afire with gunfire. No Japs found on beach at all. Airfield rapidly taking shape. We had no fighter coverage after 10 AM. Only 1 Jap Judy came in during day at noon and dropped bomb between LST's. No damage. 287 men off 2 burning LST's. Underway at 1830 with 21 LST's and 5 DD's, but at 1900 report was that Jap BB Task Force coming our way. That sent everything out but cruisers and 7 DD's. PT boats have begun their patrol. One 10 miles off Manila Harbor at night. Planes attacked us 1715 to 1845, no damage. Beach had many AA guns (US) and fighter planes in operation. Passed the 2 burning LST's at 2000. Hall (DD) went out to sink them. Halsey's carrier planes are keeping all Japs on ground north of us. Doing a top notch job. This 14 to 20 hours on radar each day is getting me down."

16 Dec. "Passed Radford and her outfit at 2 AM going north. Cruiser joined us shortly before noon. Japs didn't come in last night. Quiet most of day only few Japs reported."

17 Dec. Sun. Cruiser Force pulled ahead and BB, CVE Force to our west. Stevans (can) shot down 1 plane shortly after daylight coming in low on water. Couple Japs during the day, none came in until after sunset and he turned back in face of AA fire. Began trip through Surigao Strait at 2000. Very quiet all the way in. Radford got 2 Jap planes on her trip up."

18 Dec. '44 "Alongside tanker 9 AM, fueled, then alongside Boots. Took on ammo, then anchored. 2 cruisers are in and Nashville has already left. Over 400 killed and wounded on her."

19 Dec. '44 "Sitting at anchor everyone still seems to think we'll go back to the States after next operation has been completed."

20 Dec. '44 "Our trip to Mindora tomorrow has been cancelled. Waiting with cruisers just in case the Japs decide to send in their battle force. 14 new men came aboard the 18th, about 10 are to be transferred back including Matty, but Ole Man isn't going to let him leave until this operation is over. One Jap Nell came in after sunset low, but was shot down. Fell 1,000 feet off our beam. We and all ships were pouring it to him. DD Dashiell hit by 5" in stack and four wounded. The OTC (Operation Task Force Commander) gave us credit for 2 planes knocked down after Nashville got hit going up to Mindora."

21 Dec. "Fellow that missed ship in Admiralty Islands came aboard. Flown to Sansapor and Moratia. Japs bomb them each night and then come here. The men also had 10 days in Sydney, Australia. Plenty hot here."

22 Dec. "2 fellows off a DD tied 50 black powder cans together and using them as a float, left ship at night and made their way out into Leyte Gulf on their way to States, they said. 2 DE's, 2 old DD's and DD Spencer were lost in typhoon off Manila a few days ago. From Halsey's force some were damaged in the typhoon. Only 50-75 men escaped when the ships capsized or sunk."

23 Dec. " 1 Jap Nick over late afternoon, no damage. Bong with 39 Japs to his credit was shot down. Turned up O.K. at another field."

24 Dec. Sun. "Christmas Eve! Never knew it. Even painting ship today as usual. Went aboard Stag early morning. Old Man keeps crew up half each night at GQ. Really get them down. 1 Jap shot down by night fighter while bombing air strip."

25 Dec. "Christmas. Chaplain from Phoenix came over and held services. Big turkey dinner and all trimmings. Command Performance on radio all afternoon. GQ after sunset until almost midnight. No raids."

26 Dec. "Over and topped off in fuel, then anchored. B24 came in with 2 engines out and only 1 wheel down. All bailed out, but pilot and he landed in water O.K. At 1800 Jap Task Force were 107 miles due west of Mindora. Underway to try to catch them to chase them as long as our fuel will allow us. 4 cruisers, 8 DD's in Surigao Strait at 2200 at 25 K."

27 Dec. " Mindora bombarded at midnight for 20 minutes by the Jap force of 1 BB, 1 CA and 8 DD's. 1 Jap DD reported sunk by planes. Sea a little rough mid morning. Speed 27 K. Few fellows sick. I felt a little green. In where the Japs bombed at US base at Mindoro at 1600, slowed to 20 K. 1 liberty ship beached and burning, 5 or 6 more looked O.K. Along beach smoke rising in spots over a length of 4 or 5 miles a few thousand yards inland. Planes landing and taking off though Japs seem to have done a good job. (on air strip) Jap force is 20 miles NW at 1500, running in circles. 1 Jap in water was picked up by O'Bannon. PT went alongside Louisville and put 5 Japs aboard they picked up in water. 1 PT came alongside and we gave them 2 cases of beer.

PT's attacked Jap ships last night and claimed to have sunk 2 DD's and hit the BB. Jap planes came in from 1930 to 2400 bombing beach. Some passed as close as 1 1/2 miles

from us. We circled formation and had radar watch, but we didn't fire and none attacked us. (We were under orders not to fire unless ship was attacked) P61 night fighters shot down 3 Jap planes including one Tony. The last plane to circle us was a big flying boat, Emily. Jap ships reported going west, then shortly before midnight one plane reported 10 ships 65 miles west of us. Used AA and search light on plane."

MacArthur was in charge of all operations. We knew that the Jap TF was on the way and coming in a line of Mindoro. The Navy Commander asked permission to leave and go and MacArthur refused. We could have been there if he had let us. We waited for one full day for permission to go. It was tragic that we couldn't have been there to help.

The reason we were not to fire unless we were attacked is because there was a night fighter overhead in a plane especially built for night fighting and equipped with radar. It was a P61.

When he shot down a Jap plane, the Commodore told the pilot on the radio, "Good work."

The pilot replied, "Good work, Hell—I can't see a damn thing. The guy sitting here running the radar tells me how to line up and when to push the button. I can't see a thing!!!"

We were on the ship and we could see the P61 closing in on a Jap plane and then when he fired. We had never used them like this before and the Japs had no idea what was happening.

28 Dec. '44 "Still GQ since yesterday noon. 2 PBY's failed to find Jap ships west of us. Discontinued search at 4 AM. We are patrolling 2 miles off beach at 15 K. Jap planes attacked convoy coming up. Hit cargo ships off Negros Island. They had no CAP all day. From correct reports, when Jap force came in yesterday and bombarded beach at Mindoro, they landed troops in 2 places with radio gear and left. Only 1 PT attacked and he did no damage. The other PT boats ran up on the beach and the men went ashore for protection. We turned south at 29 K for Leyte at 1900. Had to slow to 27 K as 2200 DD's can't keep up."

29 Dec. "Passed convoy at 3 AM going north. At 8 AM saw cargo ship that had been hit on bridge. A Merchant Marine liberty ship went out to tow it in. No trouble in Surigao Strait (that was a favorite place for the Japs and suicide planes to hit us) and on to San Pedro Gulf. Fueled and then anchored. Got a letter from the Navy wanting more information of my flight qualifications."

30 Dec. "Was to go over to sea plane tender, Carrutuck, but unable to make it. 2 DD's and sea plane tender came in from Admiralty Island. Only a couple false red alerts."

31 Dec. Sun. "MacArthur claimed to have sunk 3 Jap DD's and damaged the CA and BB off Mindoro—more propaganda. Went aboard Carrutuck to get exams, but sent to Tangier to take the mental test---guess I need more brains, but I struggled thru it O.K. Then back to Carrutuck and was informed to report back tomorrow for physical. Be a miracle if I pass it. Came back and stopped on Wastch, then to ship. C46 and 47's form a continuous line in and out all day. DD Hutchens is in California enjoying a

little leave. Today is the end of '44. Hope I can see '45 end with much different scenery."

Something happened on the day of the landing in the invasion of Leyte Oct. 20 that I had never seen before—or afterward. They took pieces of metal that they used to make landing strips on the beaches, and they put them on a LST. Then a Piper Cub plane took off from it. He was spotting for 5-6 hours, as long as he had gas. He would tell where they needed shelling, where the Japs were coming from, etc. The Jap fighters would try to catch him, but he would dip down low—looked like he was among the coconut trees—and the fighters would fly past him. The Piper Cub was slow and the fighters were fast. It was a big help. The pilot had told them that he would need a clear strip of land on the beach when his fuel ran out and he did get it—without the Japs.

At the Leyte invasion we were at GQ for so many hours straight and I got so tired that I would stand up and watch the radar so if I fell asleep, I would topple and hit the bulkhead (wall) and wake up.

When GQ sounded, there were three beeps and "All hands, man your battle stations. Unidentified air craft (or surface contact)." Then 5 or 6 more beeps.

In going to our battle stations we went forward on the starboard side and aft on the port side. If anyone went the wrong way, he would get hit about 10 times because everyone was in a rush and didn't expect wrong way traffic. New sailors learned in a Hurry or they got clobbered.

The PT boats were fast—about 60-65 K and all other ships were slow. John F. Kennedy was on a PT boat and his boat got cut in two by a Jap destroyer---highest speed would be 40 K. We could never figure how that could happen. The men were found a week or so afterward on an island. We received word that we were to be on the lookout for them---one was the son of a prominent man in US. We said anyone that dumb should be left on the island.

At first the PT boats had torpedoes on each side, but the boats could never get that close to the ships, so they were taken off.

1 Jan. '45 "Anchored in San Pedro Gulf at Leyte Islands in Philippines. Hot as heck. Went aboard Currituck and took flight physical and passed 4.0. Big turkey dinner aboard. They even painted ship today—great life this Navy. C47 flying N towards Mindoro. 2 hospital ships have been in. If we come out of the Luzon operation O.K., I can take anything. We leave 4th with cruiser unit—our job to stop any Jap warship from interfering with landing."

2 Jan. "The same old 2 Australian cruisers and 2 DD's came in. Many DD's, SCI's and LST's have dropped anchor in here during past week. 2 BB's, all cruisers except Phoenix and Boise pulled out just patrolling around."

3 Jan. "Jap planes have been making regular runs down each night and day. A few bombs on air strip. One hit Ammo dump a few minutes before dawn today. Some real New Year's fire works. 2 DD's in yesterday from Mindoro where they were damaged by Jap planes. A letter containing information about me went to flight board, but don't know why. They'll probably never let me get Flight Training as before. Most everyone seems to think it's the States after Luzon operation. Hope so, but doubt it. We are to stay 4 to 6 weeks."

The weeks in the States would be to modify radar and replace the 5" guns. They were worn out and wouldn't fire accurately.

4 Jan. "Underway at 1400, joined 4 cruisers and thru Surigao Strait during the night at 8 K. One convoy 10 miles behind us. Son's ship, Pres. Adams, is one of the convoys bringing up troops. Some ships came all the way from Noumea, Bougainville, Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, to Mindoro. C46 and 47's have been taking supplies to Mindoro each day. MacArthur supposed to be making this trip on Boise."

5 Jan. "Still moving slow, passed life boat off liberty ship that was hit a couple weeks ago. Sub fired fish at Phoenix and missed in mid afternoon. Taylor (DD) dropped back and found him, but failed to make a kill. Planes also dropped depth charges, no hits. Physically, crew is tired, but high morale because of going into action, but hate the ole Man. He even has drills at night when men could be sleeping. Few Japs around, but none came in on us. 2 planes made suicide dives on CVE 200 miles north of us and south of Mindoro. Badly damaged and had to be sunk. 700 men got off. 5 or 6 fellows off Fletcher were on her."

We called depth charges ash cans because they looked like barrels and were loaded with TNT. When a sub was chased, only one DD went after it because it would be dangerous for other ships. There were 3 K guns on each side of the ship that fired the depth charges and at the back of the ship, depth charges could be dropped. They were set for the depth of the sub and the pressure of the depth of the ocean is what discharged them. They would be set for various depths --trying to be above, below and same depth as the sub --to be sure they were effective. They were only used for subs. The sonar would track and determine the depth of the sub. We would drop them and keep going or the charges would damage us, too. After the charges blew, we turned and came back for another run. Sometimes it would blow the sub out of the water. One indication that it was hit was an oil slick. Of course, the sub would release oil to make us think it had been hit. The charges would kill anyone in the water. We have spent all day trying to hit a sub.

Torpedoes were discharged from the side of the ship when we were broadside of the target. They went off on contact, but they were also set at a certain depth. Because a destroyer only drew 13 feet of water, many torpedoes went under us. They were often set for the larger ships and consequently were set lower.

6 Jan. '45 "Three Jap planes passed 4 miles from us before dawn, but made no turns. Japs reported us in Sulu Sea as we are going N. Another large convoy joined up 10 miles behind the one we already have. Few Japs, but no attack."

7 Jan. Sun. "In above Mindoro before dawn and began fueling from tanker at sunrise all DD's in formation. BB's, cruisers and 2200 DD's went into bombard in Lingayen Gulf where they were to land troops yesterday. Of the 17 warships in that Task Force, 12 were hit and some twice and one sunk by suicide planes. BB California and Louisville among those hit. B25's and A20's going by us in groups of 100-150. Last we heard of BB's they were still getting hit. One Jap fighter shot down in the group that came over us early morning. 2 CVE's hit off Lingayen Gulf by Jap planes. Jap Fleet from Tokyo is steaming this way. Halsey to stop it. Planes over us late afternoon, one Irvin shot down by our ship, another came in, but left after we shot a few close ones. Japs around us all night as we passed only 60 miles off Manila. Only one came in close enough to fire. 1 man fell overboard on Phoenix during attack. Afterward, they went back but couldn't find him. We're on W side of formation and at 2230-2300 ships east of convoy were firing star shells (light up the sky) and other shells. No planes, sub or surface ship and no reports came in. 2 or 3 big explosions, probably APA or LST."

8 Jan. "Japs still all around, one crashed into APA after sunrise. Nick (Jap plane) came in at mast height and made a turn to crash us, but we shot him down at last minute. One more to our credit and I'm aging a year each day. A ship hit this morning was number 27 hit in Luzon operation. Quiet during middle of day. In original plan we were to go into Lingayen Gulf with BB. "Lucky Fletcher" keep it up, Baby!—I hope. GQ since early yesterday morning and radar doing a good job, but what a strain! One of 2200 DD hit in CIC and 10 men killed. Left formation of APA's, etc. and proceeded S at 1700. Joined another formation of APA's and CVE's, etc. 20 miles behind. 4 Jap Vals came in from S at sunset and fighters shot all 4 down. 8 miles from us 2 Zeroes came in shortly after these. The fighters missed them and they circled formation over TF. All ships missed and 1 crashed into CVE, Kitkon Bay. Afterward she fell back with 3 DD's and still able to make 3 K. All unnecessary personnel taken off. Other Jap crashed into APA, Westralia, but she is still making it o.k. Australian CA was hit in bombardment at Lingayen Gulf. Japs around all night, but no attacks. 3 CVE's and 2 DE's joined us in China Sea at 1800."

When I said the Jap planes crashed that meant they were suicide planes that dove into the ships.

9 Jan. "Japs closed us to 4 miles, then out. Rangers report that Japs have backed up 15-20 miles at end of Lingayen Gulf after bombardment and where we are to land. H hour 9:30. Planes uncovered many Jap planes on ground near here yesterday. They were cleverly camouflaged. Called all available fighters out to strafe

them. The firing we saw a couple nights ago, was when a Jap DD came out of Manila at 35 K close to 11,000 yards before he fired star shell and our DD saw him. Both opened fire and Jap closed to 1100 yards before he was blown up. Shaw and 1 other DD of ours hit 80 miles due west Manila at 0300 yesterday. We are 60 miles W of Lingayen Gulf with CVE and along with 6 CVE's and CA formation that was heavily hit 3 days ago. Boise with MacArthur left us last night. Shamrock Bay left us this afternoon. Very quiet and no bogies as we patrolled back and forth of Lingayen area, sometimes only 400 miles from Hong Kong and China."

10 Jan. '45 "Steaming south during night to just above Manila to pick up more ships. 2 DD's and 2 CVE's. Turned north shortly before noon with another large formation of LST's, AK's, APA's, etc. Pres. Adams is supposed to be in this group. Son is only 10-15 miles east of me. Japs have an estimated force of 135,000 troops on Luzon. We are to land 150,000. We are to bombard in Subric Bay a few miles north of Manila Bay, 29 Jan. unless changes are made. I hope Kadashan Bay (CVE) left and joined ship steaming to Leyte as she was hit 3 days ago. TBF crashed in water, we picked up the 3 men and none hurt. They don't like the can. Too much rocking and rolling. This China Sea is much rougher than anything we have seen lately. Radio Tokyo had a nice program today—good music—"The Lady is in Love With You", etc. Claimed 35 US ships sunk and many planes downed by the "special attack" on ships and planes. Says their fleet and air force is continuing to attack us. I haven't seen a Jap plane in 2 days and no ships. They tell of a fierce battle on beach, wiping out the US and they have us where they want us to completely wipe out US forces in Philippines. We aren't at GQ any more except alerts. Our forces on beach are in 10 miles and have seen no Japs. DE Rowell can only make 9 K as one engine broke down. Jap plane came in with our fighters and TBF's as they came in to land on the carrier at sunset. The Jap circled formation and dropped 2 bombs, no damage. He was hit in wings by gunfire, but made it away o.k. Made our fighters look silly trying to catch him."

11 Jan. "Transferred TBF (above) crew back to the Marcos Island (carrier). No attack midmorning. Rowell can now make 15 K on 1 engine. Convoys pass going in and out of Lingayen Gulf quite often. 2 PT's are to go into Manila Bay tonight to see how things are. 50 P 38's to begin using air strip at Lingayen tomorrow."

12 Jan. "Jap 30 K bombers went into Lingayen last night and attacked ships with depth charges. 1 Jap fished out of water. Few Jap planes around, but no attacks. 1 TBF came in after dark shot up. Made 10 attempts before setting down safely. Jap Task Force of carriers reported coming our way. Can get here tomorrow if they keep coming, but Hasley will probably slow them down. He's some place in China Sea."

Planes were returning to the carrier and the Torpedo Bomber was shot up, but he could fly and stay in the air all right. It was decided that the other planes would land, the crew would get the planes out of the way and then the crippled plane could come in. They were in a circling pattern and landing one by one when it was discovered that 2 Jap planes were in the circle. They were shot down, but by that time it was dark. It was light and then darkness in the South Pacific—very little twilight. The TBF made attempts at landing, but his engine would conk out, he would pull up

and try again. Finally, the Commander told him to ditch the plane in the water. The pilot said, "One more try, I'm sure I can make it." He did make it that time—of course, he crashed, but the crew of 3 were alive and well. He knew that if he ditched it in the ocean, there would be very little chance of them being picked up---it was dark, no lights and the ship wouldn't stop.

13 Jan. '45 "Sea is plenty rough. Ship rocks and rolls all day and night. Fighter crashed in water as he went to land on carrier. We picked up pilot o.k. Another crashed in water late afternoon, but pilot didn't get out. Jap Navy seems to turn back each time under darkness."

14 Jan. Sun. "Boise and 2 DD's joined us. 1 carrier dumped a fighter over the side that was damaged in landing. Went along Radford for radar tubes, also Sanginam Bay (carrier) and put pilot (we had picked up) aboard. Moving NE last of month with BB's and bombard Bonins 750 miles south of Tokyo. We fueled the entire TF Friday the 11th from tanker 76."

15 Jan. "Another fighter dumped in water because of damage. Still rough. The monkey we got a couple days before leaving Leyte is getting used to it all and forever in trouble."

16 Jan. "Little cooler last few days, still running in circles of Lingayen. Hopewell picked up crew of PBM (4 engine flying boat) in water at 2200 and sank plane. Sea is plenty rough. We are taking 30 degrees to starboard and 15 degrees to port on rolls."

17 Jan. "Four large TF met north of Lingayen. Our force, 2 CVE forces of 5 CVE's each and 12 DD's and DE's with each. Also Battleship Force of 6-7 BB's and 11-15 DD's. Could see very little as it was foggy. Our 3 CVE's and 2 DE's joined one TF and all CVE's in the 3 groups began to transfer serviceable planes to CVE's that are to stay from the ones that are returning south (out of war zone). 2 damaged planes dumped into the sea. Our TF of CL's turned south for Mindoro at sunset close behind CVE's."

Jan. 18 "Mail transferred to ship going S yesterday. Joined CVE Force at 1300, 4 CVE's and 15 DD's and DE's. 3 CVE's, 2 CL's and 10 DD's and DE's went in to fuel at Mindoro. We are patrolling in China Sea."

Jan. 19 "Monkey jumped overboard from depth charges that were on the fantail late yesterday afternoon. Turned S to Mindoro at sunset."

20 Jan. "DD Colghan and ourselves in ahead of rest of formation, fueled and while getting ammo, the 2 CL's came in. 6 large tankers at anchor. One tanker was hit 27 Dec. and it is sitting on bottom and still burning. About 4 feet around stacks above water. C46 and 47's continuously going out N for Lingayen. No provisions available. Out mid afternoon at 15 K. Sea as smooth as glass here. 1 Ammo ship was hit by Jap suicide plane and all (ship and plane) went up in one puff a few days ago, but all hands were off ship as they left each afternoon and came back the next morning."

21 Jan. Sun. "Turned W as soon as clear of Strait and joined our CVE's and other CL's. Sea is rolling again as usual. Jap DD reported in area—spotted near Manila last night. Radford and us have full steam up and the task to destroy him, if found. Jenkins and LaVallette left Leyte today and are supposed to bring our mail. One of the fellows in the radar gang got burned by hot water when the ship went on a big roll.

Dr. has him wrapped up from knees to chest. Don't know how much harm it'll do to him. Babcock was smashed by torpedo tubes about a month ago and still has big swelling on leg—says it will get well in time. A few days ago I lost my footing on a 30 degree roll and hit the rail rather hard—"just a little soreness." Dr. refused to check a sailor on a LCT—his temperature was 103. The Commodore gave him an order to get over there, and he went."

22 Jan. '45 "Morale of the crew is high and no complaining as can be expected as we are doing something and not all drills. You can tell everyone is tired inwardly and most everyone talks of a rest. We are W of north corner of Mindoro. During the night we took position 17 miles ahead of formation, just in case."

The one out in front was the "point man" where we would detect the enemy first.

23 Jan. "Sea is rolling as much as before. 2 tankers came out at dawn yesterday and fueled entire force and left after sunset."

24 Jan. "Planes sighted small boat and Nicholas went out and picked up 3 Jap Army men and brought them back to Phoenix. They seemed very weak, said they left Manila the 2nd of Jan. and knew nothing of invasion—they caught only 1 fish on trip. That was all they had to eat in the 21 days."

25 Jan. "2 DD's exchanged positions and Jenkins and LaVallette joined formation. At 1600 they put mail aboard 3 CVE's and 1 CL. Phoenix, Radford and ourselves are to bombard at Manila Bay entrance. Troops took Clark Field."

26 Jan. "Still going in circles. Jenkins came alongside and gave us our mail. Half of the packages were smashed and many destroyed entirely."

27 Jan. "Joined by 3 DE's and 3 AO's. Fueled from same one as last Monday. Jenkins got hit by shore batteries in Lingayen Gulf during the landing and 4 men were killed."

When we fueled at night in the ocean, it was interesting. First of all, there were no lights. The tanker would be steaming 12-15 K and a ship would come up on either side of it. A rope from the tanker would be thrown to the ship---if the throwing wasn't successful, they would shoot the rope over. The fuel lines would be connected by pulling them over with the rope. The ships were about 15-20 feet apart. As soon as the fueling was finished, the ship would pull away and another ship would pull up alongside the tanker in his place.

28 Jan. "CL and Radford and ourselves left formation shortly after noon and proceeded at 17 K and joined landing force of 28 ADA's, 16 DE's and light DD's, 50-60 LST's, LCI's and AM's just before sunset."

29 Jan. "Off beach at north of Manila Bay. Reconnaissance troops went ashore an hour before sunrise. No Japs around. Guerrillas came out to Flag Ship and gave information. H hour 0830—no resistance. One US Army Captain told how he and another Captain hid and fought with Filipinos since Japs took over. Gave important information. Few Japs around, but most of them northern tip of Bataan. Japs raided village 3 days ago looking for these men. Shortly before noon we dropped S to Subic Bay and took a look near entrance and could see no men, only coastly Jap artillery. Steamed around outside. Awaiting orders after bombardment was cancelled.

(because no Japs in the area) Only 5-10 miles off Bataan. Corrigidor can be seen at times 15 miles away."

30 Jan. '45 "In Subic Bay 9 AM with AM's (mine sweep). All sizes 3"-8" shore batteries on island in center of entrance, but no life to be seen as island had been heavily hit. Army Staff Sgt came aboard Fletcher—came to the ship from shore in a canoe. He was on Corrigidor when it fell in '42, has since been hiding out, worked on a farm and fought with the Guerrillas. He told us that on Dec. 15, 1200-1400 American prisoners were on board a Jap cargo ship bound for a place close to Tokyo when 6 US planes attacked her only a few miles off Subic. (The pilots only knew it was a Jap ship, not that it had prisoners) 14 men managed to escape from ship's hole before Japs locked the hatches and the rest went down with the ship as planes bombed and strafed. 12 of the men were turned in by Filipinos and 2 were found by Guerillas. US plane picked one up a few days ago. Japs completely wrecked a small town and burned down most everything, looks like a ghost town. Japs began leaving here in Dec., but didn't leave the strongly fortified island (the island was at the entrance of Subic Bay) until 9 days ago. Asked Guerrillas about fighting here. His words, "Big fight, damn big fight". We then shipped left to cover landing south tomorrow. Put Sgt aboard Flag Ship. Joined formation landing craft at S entrance of Manila Bay after wasting time all night. Some Japs on beach, heavy machine gun fire in couple places, but we wiped the machine gun nests out by small ship fire. We're just taking it easy—3rd day at GQ! Corrigidor has been bombed a few times since we have been around. Japs put up a heavy AA barrage. We found a floating mine, destroyed it with 40mm fire. We left late afternoon, steaming S at 12 K and joined 3 CL's and 3 DD's."

This particular mine had come loose and was floating on the water. Mines were anchored and then they floated. There were different lengths of cable and that made the mines set at various depths.

1 Feb. "In Mindoro 8 AM, fueled, then anchored. CL Cleveland at anchor and brought up mail for all heavy ships, but not DD's. No food supply ship in, so we still eating little—really reduce on this diet. Mooer, DE that Roosevelt's son FDR, Jr is Skipper on, sank sub early Monday. 3 DD's came in. Quite a few ships in, air field is a steady dust storm. American Rangers freed over 500 men from Jap prisons yesterday on Luzon."

2 Feb. "Plenty hot. Movies top side. First night last night that I had more than 6 hours sleep since Oct. 1."

3 Feb. "Riding anchor. Food is plenty short—some DD's are on 2 meals a day."

4 Feb. Sun. "Underway on patrol with 2 DD's outside anchorage area after 2 days back in."

5 Feb. "Back and forth at 10 K. Many small ships come in and go out. General Court Martial for Babcock was thrown out finally. He got 20 days restriction which all of us have had for over a year. Freeman, who killed Hill last Feb, was free of all charges. Tender Carrutock came in yesterday, circled and headed N."

6 Feb. '45 "Automatic weapons fired yesterday. They say there is an ammo shortage. The Ole Man doesn't know it. In, fueled, anchored at noon."

7 Feb. "3 DD's left for Subic Bay."

8 Feb. "Force of LCT's and 5 AK's came in last night from Leyte with some food. We were to go on K rations tomorrow. Army on beach has had very little fresh food. Food came aboard during the day, very little fresh meat or other food. Underway at 1800 for Subic Bay with 4 CL's, 9 DD's at 16 K."

9 Feb. "In Subic Bay at 10 AM and anchored. Continuous firing of artillery can be heard. 3 DD's at anchor. The mountains were high and near the top we could see something burning during the night N of us."

10 Feb. "Went to Hopewell to get mail. Blue Ridge came in. Next stop Bataan and Corrigidor."

11 Feb. Sun. "Only a few miles from us on east side, planes are bombing and strafing. Harbor covered with black smoke and falling trash. All ships topped off fuel, then anchored. Tuesday or as soon after as Army is ready, we begin a 3 day bombardment of Bataan and Corrigidor. Jap Task Force reported coming from Singapore and we may have to stop it, if called."

12 Feb. "Heavy firing can be heard and seen in and around. Zig Zag passage, as usual. Little mail came in."

13 Feb. "Underway at 6 AM with the 5 cruisers and 8 DD's. Around edge of Bataan, planes are dropping bombs and also on Corrigidor. So much smoke most of the time we can't see anything only a few miles away. All ships shelled Corrigidor and Bataan and no return fire. Back to Subic and anchored."

14 Feb. "Underway at 5:30 AM with same ships. Planes made early strike. Jap Task Force of 2 BB's, 1 cruiser and 3 cans are south and little west of Hong Kong at 4:30 AM. Army Air Force had failed to hit even one ship. They were supposed to stop them while we do this job. Japs opened fire from both sides on AM's after they entered Manila Bay. All of us moved in and blasted Corrigidor and other island E and S. None of our ships hit and firing ceased shortly before noon. Back in firing after noon 1,000 yards from Bataan, 35,000 yards from N Corrigidor. At 1336 Japs from Corrigidor gave us a direct hit with 6" shell on main deck forward and right gun. 3 men killed, 7 wounded—2 later died. Gun one hit many holes, and Gun 2 took damage and set fire in magazine (where we kept the ammo). What kept us from blowing sky high, no one knows. 3 guns firing for awhile, then one jammed and hoist jammed on another. Left one firing part of the time, but managed to silence Jap firing from half moon shaped caves, but only after Hopewell was hit at 1345 and AM 48 hit and on fire. We moved in under smoke to AM still closer to pick up 26 men from water. AM sank, all the time the Japs were firing and we fired what we could at Japs even using 40mm (they only reach 2 miles). Hopewell had 8 killed and 7 wounded when she passed us going out. Men blown apart were hanging on #1 stack platform where they were killed. Other dead were hanging over the rails and the deck was red with blood. Finally left at 1455—one hour and 20 minutes after being hit. One Dr. and Pharmacy Mate came over to help from Phoenix. Hopewell and us left at 1700 and came in to Subic Bay and anchored. Another Dr. came aboard. We got blood plasma from Blue Ridge. LST 777, hospital

ship, came alongside late and took off wounded. One boy was wounded in Gun 1 --had been in since '40 and was on W.Va. at Pearl Harbor Dec. 7, '41. His legs were almost entirely blown off between knee and feet—he died later. His name was Wilhelm, and he was always smiling and always had a cheerful word. Smith from Ala, (who was only 16—he had lied about his age) had top of head blown off and other parts blown open. I had talked to him a short time before and it doesn't seem true. One boy I had left 5 minutes before was hit in the head. Frenchie was only a few yards from him at the time. Ole Man seemed to be in no hurry to get out after being hit and only one or two guns firing. Shell exploded 7 feet above my bunk in chief's quarters. Holes everywhere—I can see sky, water and below. My bunk wet from burst water lines and holes all in it. (60 plus holes in my bunk). Radford and LaVallette both hit mines in sweep area later and they are on the way in, but can't make much speed due to damage. All but 3 men got off AM (mine sweep). 2 Stretcher cases---one with broken leg and one of our boys had stomach split open."

When the US occupied Corrigidor before the war, they had built caves which had shore batteries in them. They had doors on them. The US surrendered Corrigidor to the Japs in '42. The Japs were in the caves, but would open the doors to fire and then close them. It was very difficult to dislodge them.

15 Feb. '45 "Admiral in command sent a message expressing his regrets for the damage done to us, but congratulations on our fine work. (we knocked out the batteries in caves—hit them while the door was open). Underway at 4 AM. Met LaVallette and Radford coming in. One boy, Bigelow, that went into magazine when burning yesterday was taken sick at 1 AM, given oxygen, but died at 9 AM after pneumonia had set in. Gas ate up his lungs. B 24's, A20's, P38's and P47's hit Corrigidor and island in between, shelling. Japs still firing from Corrigidor. One LSM went up after being hit by mortar fire. We are running among the island firing all day. Pumped water from magazines and using gun #2 in local control. Cruisers and DD's came in at noon to assist. Can't see why they didn't give us some BB to use against Corrigidor. We retired W after dark."

Bigelow was in a repair party in that area, but when the fire started in the magazine, he jumped down in it with a fire extinguisher without a gas mask. He put the fire out and saved the ship as it would probably have blown up because the shrapnel ripped the powder cans open and the fire started. The gas from the burning powder was destructive to his lungs. His family received the Medal of Honor, the highest award, for his bravery. Later, a ship was also named after him.

There were air strikes with high altitude bombings on Corrigidor for the 30 days before D day. The Japs in the caves were still safe. The day before the troops landed, fire bombs were dropped.

16 Feb. "Back in at dawn beginning to shell Corrigidor. Paratroopers began landing for one hour at 8:30 AM, then small landing crafts went in at 1030. Heavy firing met them. More Paratroopers after noon. We went in to 2,000 yards firing, some near misses on us and no hits. We silenced a few shore batteries. In one sweep, 115 mines were cut today. Hundreds have been cut since we arrived. One mine exploded between Jenkins and us in close to the beach of Corrigidor late this afternoon. Small

fast boats carrying explosives attacked ships before dawn. PBY and other Naval patrol planes spotted Jap Task Force all way up China coast, but Army found weather too bad to even make an attempt to bomb them, so they made it on to Tokyo safely. 3 cruisers of ours and 4 DD's left to fuel and get ammo. 2 cruisers and 1 DD and ourselves patrolled west. 2 cans stayed near Corrigidor if help was needed and they also fired star shells over island for troops. Heavy CA fired 30-40 salvos early morning light and left."

Corrigidor had a small beach on one end and the rest was mountainous. There was a flat plateau on top where the US had built barracks, etc and of course, the caves in the sides of the mountain. When it fell in '42, the Japs had superiority in everything and they cut Corrigidor off and no supplies could come in. When the Paratroopers jumped, those that landed on the sides of the mountain were killed, but the ones that landed on top managed to "mop up" the invasion. L.B. Wynn was one of those Paratroopers. They would tell us where to train our guns, which helped. Otherwise, we would have to watch where their firing came from when the cave doors were opened. Sometimes we sat dead in the water to become a "sitting duck" target ---when the Japs fired, we could see where the guns were.

17 Feb. '45 "Honolulu (cruiser) is in California. LaVallette in bad shape---bow only 4 feet above water as she is flooded all forward. 6 killed and 19 wounded. Nicholas was hit by 40mm shells yesterday. Wounded Paratroopers came by us in small landing craft---they were rather shot up. Some were wounded while coming down and some afterward. Abbott picked up Japs in water and one told that 3,000 Japs were on Corrigidor. (our Intelligence report had said there were only 500 there) Jap that spoke English was born in Los Angeles. We went up to the island Battleship---didn't look as if Japs used it lately. What a fort! Solid cement and steel, 2 turrets of 2 14" and 2 6" guns on each side. The other island had caves and guns knocked out. Then back over to Corrigidor and this on S side of entrance. More Paratroopers land, still in tough spot. Only few planes around and Japs strafing landing ships that go in. 300 Paratroopers have been killed or wounded. Back in Subic Bay at dark and fueled, then anchored. Ship is in heck of shape forward. Ole Man asked for 6 days alongside tender and said ship crew could repair most of damage. It's a great life."

The one I called Battleship Island was made by the US when they were there the first time. The side facing Manila bay was a solid wall of steel and concrete and the other had gun turrets. The US sabotaged it when they left as the Japs never could use it.

18 Feb. Sun. "Went alongside ammunition ship---same one as in Mindoro. 1400 rounds came aboard. Ammo ship was Merchant Marine and they wouldn't turn a hand to help in any way. Our men had to run the machinery. Don't see why they ever sent them out here as they hold up the war as much as possible, it seems. This is 3rd or 4th cases that I have seen from Merchant Marines. Sunset along side Radford, her bow low in water. She's flooding forward engines and fire room and steam tables. Jenkins seams were busted in mine explosion the other day. Hopewell left. Our entire division has been damaged. Radford and LaVallette went in and took ours and Hopewell's places after we were hit."

19 Feb. '45 Went to Nicholas, then to beach and got mail. Hospital ship, Hope, is in. 4 subs at anchor."

20 Feb. "Underway just before noon. Fueled alongside Jenkins. Radford pulled out for Leyte. 22 men from her transferred to other ships. We got parts from Radford to repair gun #1. Ole Man finally received orders to report back to States as soon as new Skipper, who is on his way, arrives. Tender Griffin is in. Most ships received mail today—ours went to Saipan. Church services were held aboard by Chaplain from one of cruisers yesterday for men killed. 4 men killed on Grande Island by booby traps. They were off one of the cruisers. Many supplies came aboard—fresh meat, fruits, etc. ate apples and oranges."

21 Feb. "Still at Jenkins. Some mail came aboard. My left eye is a little blue. The quick motion of the ship threw me into a steel post. Frenchie had a pencil behind his ear and my arm hit it and knocked the pencil into just below the corner of my right eye today. Radar operator that had same GQ station as mine on another DD was killed when the BK fell on him." BK was the equipment that identified friend or foe—IFF.

22 Feb. "A DD was sunk off Mindoro by Jap sub. It surfaced after ship went down and strafed men in water. Ole Man won't even leave ship to play ball with the Commodore. The 120 men taken from hospital in Manila (Jap prisoners) are aboard one supply ship in harbor to be taken to Australia, then flown to US. None are well and many minus arms and legs from torture. They had plenty prisoners from Bataan and Corrigidor when it fell in '42. No good food for 10 weeks on Bataan and then that death march many were run over by tanks and clubbed to death. Cost Japs 6,000-8,000 men to take Bataan in '42. MacArthur claims it to be clear of Japs now, but it's a damn lie. Many are still active."

The island on Subic Bay that had so many shore batteries that weren't manned had a sandy place that was flat and we went in and played ball there.

When Corrigidor fell to the Japs in '42, the US military was taken to Bataan. Both the prisoners on Corrigidor and Bataan were not fed much at all and then they marched them for days. Innumerable men died. The Japs were terribly cruel and men that fell were bayoneted and had all kinds of torture.

23 Feb. "Last few days we have moved ships around during air attacks, etc. Damage to ships and men much more than news tells." During air attacks, we took to the open sea---so we wouldn't be "sitting ducks" and so we could fire at the planes.

The US news didn't give as many fatal statistics and the Japs gave more. In fact, they said they had destroyed more ships than the US ever had!

24 Feb. "Underway early and fueled, then anchored. Dobbin tanker entered port. Underway 1730 with 3 cruisers and 3 cans for Mindoro at 16 K.

25 Feb. Sun. '45 "In Mindoro at 8 AM. Fueled and then anchored. Plane tender and 5 DD's are in. Captain Cole (our ex-Skipper) is on Flusser. Ole Man tore up one of the boy's letters because he said the Fletcher isn't as lucky as it used to be."

26 Feb. "Went on beach in afternoon and played a little football and walked around air strip. Back to ship on LCI."

27 Feb. '45 "Underway with our 3 CL's, 3 DD's at 0700 at 16 K for Puerto Princess. Joined landing force of LST's, LCI's, LSD's, etc. at 2200 and steamed 8 K.

28 Feb. '45 "GQ before dawn. Cruisers shelled beach a little, troops ashore at 0845. Met no Japs. When we came out last Dec. for Mindoro landing, Japs thought we were coming here, so they made 200 Marines that they captured in '42 dig trenches and get in them. Then the Japs poured gasoline in it and set it afire. Some jumped out and ran down the cliff. 10 hid that got away that night. They were picked up and kept safe by Guerrillas. Others tried to swim out in water, but were captured and killed by Japs. No Jap found on beach by the time we left at 1800 at 20 K for Subic Bay--same ships that came down. We already have another operation mapped out. O'Bannon left with sub contact at 2200 until hunter killer group arrived."

1 Mar. "Abbott went in to Mindoro to pick up any mail at 6:30 AM and joined us at 9:30. In Subic and anchored 1830. Received word that Cooper who had stomach cut open when we were hit, died the 21st. One of the others had to have arm cut off above elbow. AA fire overhead from beach during movie."

Sharpnel had sliced Snyder's arm so badly that they had to remove it.

2 Mar. "A Jap came out of caves on Grande Island and gave himself up to fellows playing baseball. Wonder he didn't kill a few in past weeks. Fueled, then back to anchorage."

3 Mar. "Underway at 8 AM for Corrigidor. Anchored in lagoon 1/2 mile off shore of Corrigidor. Artillery shelling. Big rock 2-3 miles from us and GQ John couldn't resist temptation, so he put a few rounds of 5" in it. (we knew no one was there, he just shot at the rock) P47's made dive bombing and strafing runs. Only every 3rd or 4th pilot seems to have the guts to hit his target--others don't come down low enough. 30 men went ashore to get used parachutes and other stuff for Admiral---this is fighting a war. 2400 Paratroopers landing here. At least 1200 have been killed or wounded. 260 killed in landing by Jap machine gunfire, 16 chutes failed to open. Over 5,000 Japs on island. 4,496 have been killed by Army scoreboard. 200 Marines killed one time the Japs blew up a tunnel on side of cliff. Army holds top of Corrigidor and Japs control sides of cliff. One Sgt disappeared down side today and failed to return. Army Paratroopers were told there were only 500 Japs on island. We brought back a small boat Japs had loaded with TNT to use as suicide boats as they did one morning. Captured one Jap that came out of cave, brought him to Subic with us (on Fletcher) at 1800. Fueled and then anchored."

The Japs would use the small boats, fill them with TNT at the bow (front) of the boat which had a small car motor. They would try to ram the ships. Fortunately, they never succeeded.

4 Mar. Sun. "Hot as heck, went to Grande Island and played ball. All pre war buildings and everything on island were destroyed. Underway at 1800 with 2 CL's and 5 DD's for Mindoro and next operation."

5 Mar. "In Mindoro and fueled and anchored. Tangier and Currituck in."

6 Mar. "2 DD's left after sunset."

7 Mar. '45 "Underway at 8 AM with 2 cruisers and 3 DD's for bombardment of Zamboang, Mindanao where troops are to land the 10th. B25's attacked yesterday and reported heavy AA as 3 were shot down. 8,000 Jap troops estimated to be in the area we are to land. Another operation is already mapped out for us the last of month."

Due back in Subic Bay the 15th. New Skipper, Green, was an Exec from Boyd (DD) and came aboard last day in Subic. Takes over when we get back to Subic again. Doesn't look so hot. Intelligence shows that there are 10-15-6" and 8" shore batteries. Many 5" are dual purpose-- 20mm and 40mm. We are to put 15,000 men ashore the 10th. Probably be a bloody battle from the information we have."

8 Mar. '45 "Nicholas and Taylor with mine sweep at 5 AM. We covered them during the day as they cleared a channel. 4 F4U's overhead. Got a Val shortly after 8 AM as he went to land on strip. We shelled different positions and no sign of Japs. Retired to W at dark." We just went out in the sea about 15 miles.

9 Mar. "Back in early morning shelling beach. B24's pulled four runs. One plane in lower group hit by bomb from higher bombers and exploded amid ships. One man bailed out and landed in water and SOC (sea plane off a cruiser) picked him up. One ship picked up fellow captured on Bataan, then released by Japs later because of illness. Bombarded beach all afternoon. B24's high level bombing. Some Japs shell 3" fire around us, no hits on any ship. Couple planes destroyed around air strip. Went in to 1,000 yards from beach. Fellows were along rail watching and scattered when Jap salvo landed near. Retired W at darkness."

The schedule was set for the B24's to come and bomb at a high level. The B17s were to come in 10 minutes later and bomb at a lower level. The B24's were a few minutes late, the B17's came in on time. That is why one of the planes was hit.

10 Mar. "Fell in ahead of landing force—mostly LST's and LCI's---shortly after midnight. We began shelling at 7 AM. B24's bombing. Troops ashore at 9:15. H hour after terrific last minute shelling and bombing. Heavy mortar fire on landing beach. We went into 500 yds from beach shelling positions. Could see some Japs. Many shells straddled us and landed on all sides, but didn't hit. Kind of gives a funny feeling—can't keep missing. 1 LST hit and Flag Ship Rocky Mountain. Retired W at dark."

I didn't know the Lord then, but I realized later that He was the only reason I made it thru.

11 Mar. Sun. "Back in at daylight. Went in to 500 yards. Japs machine gunning landing crafts. We gave them everything, but gun barrels and still they shot back from the hills. Shells continue to land around us. Picked off Jap guns in caves on side of hill. Could see the Japs. Got that usual "Good Work" from TFC, but this is no rest. Really getting tired. Fellows are red eyed and I haven't shaved for 4 or 5 days. Japs hit fuel down on landing beach mid morning—big fire. We're running low on ammo. Alongside LST before noon for

more. Underway late afternoon with 5 LST's, 15 LCT's, 1 LSD, 1 DE, 1 DD for Leyte."

12 Mar. "Cool for a change. Speed 9 1/2 K in Mindanao Sea."

13 Mar. "Out of Mindanao Sea into the old Surigao (suicide) Strait into Leyte Gulf and San Pedro. Passed 3 small carriers. Fueled after 1 1/2 hours wait. Tanker wouldn't fuel us because we were in 7th Fleet and they're 5th Fleet. Radford sitting in unable to go into dry dock for same reason. 2 dead men still below deck. What a way to fight a war."

We called Surigao suicide because that is where we were hit by so many suicide planes. There were mountains surrounding us, so we couldn't pick them up on radar.

The Radford had flooded compartments where they were hit and couldn't open them until they went into dry dock. It would have flooded the ship if they were opened. The men were in those compartments.

14 Mar. '45 "Alongside Ammo ship early and completed taking on replacements for 1600 rounds fired. Anchored. Jenkins came alongside and brought on mail for all ships at Subic, including cruisers. Should have left Cleveland's."

15 Mar. "Underway at 7 AM to supply depot 40 miles east and just N of entrance to Leyte Gulf. Big dry dock there and a few Dutch cargo ships. 153 men came aboard for transportation to Subic. Really crowded. Wet as heck as it has been continuously raining since arriving here. Took on freight also. New Skipper took over."

16 Mar. "Underway at 6 AM to Leyte alongside Australian cruiser, Hobart, and put 90 men aboard her. Then to Jenkins to pick up food supplies. 3 of us in cans underway at 11 AM at 25 K for Mindoro."

17 Mar. "In Mindoro at 8 AM. Anchored. Passed landing force headed for Panay. 3 cruisers in at anchor. Gave them their mail. We were given another star for campaign against Tokyo Express that we stopped at Guadalcanal. Underway with same ships for Subic at 1800. New Commodore came aboard."

18 Mar. Sun. "In Subic at 8 AM, fueled and anchored. Our cruiser and DD's in. New Skipper is o.k. Both he and new Commodore want to go stateside and soon."

19 Mar. "Over to Grande Island and played football and swam. 23 of new men are to stay aboard for duty."

20 Mar. "Orders to report to San Francisco for Flight Training came in for me today—leave tomorrow on Griffin for Leyte and then Pearl and Honolulu."

21 Mar. "Leaving today noon—hate to leave friends, but great to be going HOME!"

I went from the Philippines to Pearl Harbor where I stayed for three days. Then I boarded a new troop transport on April 12, and we were headed to San Francisco! A 2/c Radarman told me to sweep and clean a compartment. I told him I was 1/c and if he wanted it done, he could do it. The Troop Commander was an Army Major and he said we (the fellows that were going back to the States) were to do the jobs that were assigned. In fact, he said, "There will be an attachment to your orders that you receive NO, I repeat, NO leave when we get to Frisco." The Skipper of the ship was a full Navy Captain and an ex sub commander. He made the Army Major eat his words. In fact, the Major had to get on the loud speaker and rescind his orders. The Captain told him that these men had just left combat and if they wanted to, they could stay in their bunks the whole trip and no one was going to stop them from doing what they wanted to do.

I had to wait in San Francisco two weeks for my class assignment for Flight Training. I stayed in a hotel and I hadn't slept in a bed for so long that it was not comfortable. I was tempted to sleep on the floor, but I decided I'd better get used to the bed since I would be in the States now.

I saw Dot each night I was there.

My Flight class was scheduled for 19 May at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn. and I would be able to go home for leave. I went to get my ticket for Alabama and they told me that the Santa Fe Chief left Wed morning and due in Chicago Saturday morning, but no telling when it would actually arrive. The City of San Francisco left Thursday at 6 PM and would be in Chicago at noon on Sat.--and it would be on time. That is the one I took. It cost \$20 extra, but it was worth it.

I got the last bedroom on the train. A Marine Captain asked if he could stay with me. Since there were two beds, I told him he could. There was Navy Pharmacist Mate on the train, too—we were the only servicemen on the City of San Francisco. People were so nice to us and bought all our food---they appreciated us and what we had gone thru.

On the train from Chicago to Montgomery, I met a WAC Lt. named Alma who was from Chicago. She had five brothers in the service and she was stationed at Maxwell. I told her we would take her to her apartment since no one was meeting her. Mother, Dad, Miriam, Bill, Stella, Joe and Myrt, Mr. & Mrs. Judge all met me. After I greeted everyone, I turned to Alma and introduced her as my wife. I know that was a bombshell! I hadn't mentioned it to her, but she went along with it. Mrs. Judge looked at her scathingly and asked, "And where did he get you?"

Alma replied, "Oh, on one of the islands in the South Pacific and we thought it would be a good idea to get married."

When I dropped Alma off at her home, I think everyone was relieved. I had had instructions from my mother not to bring home a Yankee bride!

I was home ten days and Dad had a barbeque while I was there. Alma and two other girl friends were there.

On 17 May I took the train to St. Louis. I was told the wrong train in Montgomery and I had to run to catch the correct one. In so doing, I lost my wallet and I didn't have any money! I managed to get on the train, but it was moving as I hopped on. In Birmingham Miriam and Bill met the train and loaned me a few dollars and shot wired \$100 to Northfield.

I arrived at Northfield and went to the campus of St. Olaf College which was a Lutheran school. I had never heard of the Lutheran denomination before. There were girls at St. Olaf and girls at Carlton College in Northfield. After not seeing anything but natives for so long, it was a treat! We sat in the window and watched the girls!

We had a tight schedule in Flight Training at St. Olaf. We were also informed that if we had any infraction of the rules or any grade under 2.0, we would immediately be shipped out to the South Pacific. That was a great motivation and I studied and got better grades than I ever had in my life. My roommate, Dilley, and I studied together and were with each other a lot and we were called the Gold Dust Twins. There was a laundry soap that was called the Gold Dust Twins and had an outline of twins pictured on the front. We made good grades and helped others with their studies.

Our schedule was:

| | |
|------------|---|
| 6 AM | Up and at 'em! |
| 6:30 | Room inspection then chow Colors (we fell in formation) and marched to class |
| 8-10:00 | Classes |
| 10-12:00 | PE---We only played baseball one day as too many were sitting and not exercising. We played soccer, had calisthenics, football and swam. We had to stay afloat 30 minutes without touching bottom or sides. I was in excellent shape when I left! |
| Noon | Chow |
| 1-5:30 PM | Classes Everywhere we went, we fell in formation and marched |
| 6:00 | Chow Then we had some free time, but we couldn't go off campus. |
| 8:00 | Study in our rooms with ONLY your roommate |
| 9:30-10:20 | Free time in the dorm and then Tatoo—a bugle call |
| 10:30 | Taps and room check—You better be in your bunk or you were gone |

12 Aug. '45 CELEBRATION!!! The war ended!!!! There was a lot of controversy about dropping the atomic bomb. It certainly shortened the war and saved the lives of MANY servicemen! I was glad to see it.

I met Betty Matthias at St. Olaf on the tennis court. We couldn't go off campus, so we walked and talked. She told me that I needed to be saved and my first reaction was, "saved from what?" Even tho I had gone to church all my life, I had not heard that I needed to accept Christ as my Savior for the payment of my sins. I was morally good and had thought that was enough. I realized that it wasn't. I took Jesus Christ as my Savior. Then I realized that He was the one that had protected me during the war! I wasn't saved until after I left Northfield.

If we wanted to stay in Flight Training we had to sign up for two more years AFTER we received our wings. I wanted out! One of the fellows that stayed in still hadn't been sent to Flight Training a year and half later. Sure was happy for the decision I made!

Sept. Labor Day I went to Waterloo, Iowa with Betty and her parents for the weekend and then I reported to Minneapolis, to Chicago and then to San Francisco.

In Chicago, it was just a waiting game. This is an excerpt from a letter I wrote to Betty. "Most of the fellows from the gang I came down in are still here and it doesn't seem to be much chance of getting out soon. Any place they send us so we can get settled and know how we stand is much better than just waiting and knowing nothing. NOTHING—that is certainly it and we sure have our share around here."

To be discharged in the Navy, we had to have a certain number of points. We got a half point for every month we served and overseas time didn't count. The Army got more points—but I wasn't in the Army! For a dependent, you had 10 points.

Consequently, my points weren't very high. I had about half enough. Each month they lowered the points.

I was not supposed to go any further than 75 miles from Chicago, but I did go to Rochester, Minn. to see Betty. The last of the month I was in Rochester for the weekend and the weather was bad and my flight was cancelled. I managed to catch a train but it was 4 hours late. As I arrived at the base around 11:30, they were yelling my name over the PA system and I was to be on the train at 1:00PM for Frisco. I was actually AWOL, but I caught the train and it turned out o.k.

3 Oct. '45 I went to Shoemaker Navy Base in California for three weeks. I really didn't do anything those months until I was discharged—just waiting. I did work in the Tomato Plant while there. They needed workers and I would go and work all night, then the next night I would go to Frisco. Then I would work again to get money, etc.

Another letter Oct. 5 "Arrived in Calif yesterday without any mishaps, but can't say I'm glad to be here. Finally got settled and I spent what seemed like the next hour cleaning off the dirt I had collected on the trip out. When I have to make the trip back, I hope I can travel on my own and go by the fast streamliner or fly.

This isn't such a bad place here. Rather a large base and we can get most anything we want. It's located about 28 miles east of Oakland, but they run busses in most anytime of the day and night. There is a little town only three miles from here, but don't think I'll go out to any of them. We get every 3rd day off for 24 hours then we can go any place we please. Rest of the time, as usual, we just sit around and wait.

They checked thru my records and gave me the official count for 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ points. It takes 41 to hold us in the states. From the looks of things, it's the Pacific for me and I would rather have it than sitting at this place.

Regardless of what, I am grateful to be alive and the Lord is due full credit for that as He has answered me many times. So, when I get out of here, I feel He is still looking after me. I have asked Him to take me back to Alabama, but whatever it is, I'm ready to take it."

Oct. 7 "We are still doing nothing around here. Yesterday we took a physical exam that any dead man could have passed at 100%. We are just waiting assignments. For the first time since I enlisted in the Navy I had to wash clothes. Yes, me! Guess someone liked my uniform I wore last weekend very much. At least, someone stole my pants, also my top—ain't it awful? Can't figure what makes a person do such things, only hope he needed it."

Oct. 10 "Still no chance of seeing you Christmas or any other time soon unless Washington makes some changes. It still seems that they want me to see more of the Pacific!! Regardless of how nicely I refuse, they always insist and I guess in the end I will string along with them. Last night we handled our share of tomato juice from coming on the line in single cans to cases of it. It was fun having been so long since I really worked. We get 95 cents an hour."

27 Oct. I went aboard the BB Indiana and we are going to Seattle where we will go into dry dock at Bremerton Navy Yard.

The Battleships go strictly by regulations. I was the senior radar man and I was supposed to be in charge of the radar gang. I had never seen their radar before. I told

the first class that was there to keep running it as they had been. I was just along for the ride.

Letter to Betty Oct. 27 "Today is Navy Day, they tell me. It only means we have to stay around all afternoon, when we should have been off at noon. Lots of people on board as visitors are allowed to look the ship over. Some of the boys have to show the people around and are enjoying it as many girls are around, but I can't see it, my self. None of the visitors are allowed here in CIC as radars aren't to be seen. We are sitting here listening to Alabama beat Georgia.

I began my celebration of Navy Day by having a wisdom tooth removed and at the present time it feels as if a couple little men are doing a little banging inside my jaw.

The Navy is giving no more credit than before for overseas service. $\frac{1}{4}$ of a point is all. My total is 39. Navy gives $\frac{1}{2}$ point for each year of age, that's 12 since I'm 24; $\frac{1}{2}$ point for each month of service ($19 \frac{1}{2}$) and $7 \frac{3}{4}$ overseas for a total of $39 \frac{1}{2}$. Ten more if you have a dependent—zero for me. At present it takes 44 points to get out. The first of Nov., it'll take 41 and first of Dec. it's to be cut to 39—my day! A great day, Darling, I have long dreamed of it!"

30 Oct. "We left Frisco in a hard downpour of rain and wind. By the time we reached open sea, there were quite a few who decided to rid themselves of their early morning breakfast and then ate no lunch. It was rather rough for even a battleship. I'm afraid I wouldn't have been feeling any too good if this were a tin can."

1 Nov. By the point system, I would be eligible to be discharged the first day of Dec. That was good news. The next 10 days I would go over to Seattle and I looked around.

On the 10th I went to the train station. They had two trains a day leaving around 9 PM. I went at 8:30 PM and it looked as if there were 3,000 servicemen waiting to get on the trains. The next day I went around 6:30 PM and there were still about 200-300 men waiting. By 9 PM it looked as if there were thousands behind me. The whole train was nothing but coaches—no sleepers—they were taking as many as they could at one time.

11 Nov. I left Seattle and went to Minneapolis, to Northfield and to Rochester, Minn. to see Betty. Then I went to Memphis, TN to be discharged!!

I also disobeyed my mother and married Betty in May '46 and took a Yankee bride home to Alabama.

TIDBITS

(Reading his diaries sparked many more memories. Instead of inserting them, I added them—in a hodge podge fashion. Betty)

After High School I went to work as an airplane mechanic at Maxwell Field. At one point, I went to Jackson, MS for 3 or 4 weeks where we worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Martin had built a twin engine bomber, a B26, called a Marauder. They did not have a self sealing gas tanks and we changed them and put self sealing hose and gas tanks in them.

We did not have a barber aboard the Fletcher, so some of the fellows cut each other's hair. Sam Knight always cut mine. There were quite a few things that destroyers didn't have that the large ships had.

It was figured out that we sailed 250,000 miles on the Fletcher. That is a lot of miles!

There were magnetic mines that would be attracted to the ship, so the ship would be degaussed. I don't remember just how they did it, but it would cut down on the magnetic field of the ship.

When we were having the trouble with the decoding wheel missing, we could not talk to anyone on another ship. One time we were ready to fuel from a tanker and one of the men asked how much fuel we wanted. Everyone just stood there and looked at him. He asked several times and every time he asked, he became more irritated. He swore and shouted at us. Finally, the Skipper came and told him how much we wanted. It was weird being close to ships and people and not being able to talk. We felt it was a dumb thing.

I mentioned O'Hare and what an ace pilot he was. While we were in the Coral Sea, he was ill and the Flight Surgeon restricted him from flying. Some way he managed to slip out and into his plane. He shot down 5 Jap planes that day.

It didn't take long for the US pilots to find out they couldn't dogfight with the Jap Zeros. The Zeros did not have armor plating on them, they were lighter and faster. The US would have to make passes, but not dogfight.

The Betty's were their main bombers.

One night we picked up something on surface radar that we thought was a Jap sub. We approached whatever it was and when we were about 2,000 yds from it, the guns were trained and the search lights were turned on. There sat the Jap sub on the surface. After we opened fire, there was one less Jap sub. At that time, subs had to surface and recharge their batteries after a certain length of time.

On the Japanese radio station there was a propaganda program featuring Tokyo Rose who was an American. She played nostalgic music, knew a lot about what was going on and even named some of the American service men in the South Pacific. She constantly tried to undermine the US morale and gave exaggerated claims as far as casualties. She always said that it was hopeless to expect to win over Japan.

At night when we were steaming along, I could look at the bow of the ship and as it cut thru the waves, phosphorous would cause sparks in the water. It was unusual and pretty. When everything was dark and no lights, we could also see the stars so much better. It looked as if there were millions of them and they were very bright. It was beautiful.

Normally, the ship would be steered from the bridge. However, if the bridge were hit or blown away, there was an emergency steering in the aft of the ship which would enable the ship to be steered.

At times I would go up and take the helm and steer the ship, just for the fun of it. It was the Quartermaster's job, but I was able to do it sometimes.

I am finishing this in January 2001. Many years have gone by and it has been interesting to review my war years. In those years there was a terrific amount of patriotism and this country was united against a common enemy. The pride that we had in our country was tremendous. I got irritated at some of the things that happened, but I had a pride and loyalty to the US Navy. Anchors Aweigh still makes shivers run up and down my back. I guess I will always be a United States Navy man at heart!

Tom Chesnut

NORTHAMPTON

The following letter was written to Olon Henderson in 1983 after he was deceased and we believe that we have never shared it with you.

"You don't know me, but I was one of those oily Gobs that you and your buddies pulled from the Pacific Ocean on Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1942. I'm sure glad your shipmates were on the ball that fateful night because I was tired of swimming.

I sincerely owe my life to the USS Fletcher and her crackerjack crew. I must admit as the words in the poem I wrote indicate, I was sort of scared she was a Japanese Destroyer at first as she was one of the first Flushdeckers (or the first) that we had in the Pacific. Just wanted the whole ship's company to know how grateful I and my Northampton shipmates are that the Fletcher came to the rescue. It's been a long time getting to you, but THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

Sincerely,
Alvin R. Brooks
9436 W. Heaney Circle
Santee, CA 92071

THE USS FLETCHER DD 445

I hate to get hung up on numbers
I would have liked to see 26 survive
But on November 30th, 1942
I got hung up on 445

Oh! What a wonderful sight it was
Her beacons lighting up the swell
To me she was an angel of mercy
Pulling me from the grips of hell

To many a Northampton sailor
The FLETCHER is why he's alive
Because on November 30, 1942
He got hung up on 445

I saw her flush decks and thought she was Jap
From my fish eye view from the sea
But when she slowed down and switched on her lights
I knew she was looking for me.

Our spirits were low—we had just lost our ship
But we were glad we were still alive
Not because of anything we'd done by ourselves
But by the bravery of 445

FLETCHER didn't know the meaning of fear
And remained within harm's way
She plucked us from the oily sea
To fight another day.

I'll never forget number 445
If I lived to be one hundred and three
Nor the crew of the USS FLETCHER
Who saved Nora's crew from the sea.

And now some 40 years later
I met Mr. Dickenson and his wife
He was one of the FLETCHER crewmen
And I thanked him for saving my life

Yes, I hate to get hung up on numbers
But there's lucky ones of every size
And on November 30th, 1942
My lucky one was 445.